







# SELF-DELUSION ;

OR,

ADELAIDE D'HAUTEROCHE :

A Tale.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "DOMESTIC SCENES."

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——— Oneste vogli'z, in . . . foco acceso ;  
E lungo err: in cieco laberinto.

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PETRARCH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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# SELF-DELUSION ;

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## CHAPTER I.

ADELAIDE D'HAUTEROCHE was the surviving orphan of a noble French family, every individual of which had, in one way or another, fallen a sacrifice to the French revolution.

She had been rescued by the care of an *oncle à la mode de Bretagne*, (i. e. cousin-german to her father,) from the horror of witnessing the melancholy fate of her unhappy mother when dragged to the

guillotine. He was a Chevalier de Malthe, who had been prevented from earlier emigration by a long and severe fit of illness ; had secreted the child at that moment of danger, hoping to secure her further safety by making her the companion of his flight, which was at length fortunately accomplished through the connivance of a former friend. Having reached Florence, he there placed her in a convent, as the best immediate asylum.

His original intention had been to turn his steps towards England, where he knew that a maternal grandmother of Adelaide's was still in existence ; but for an escape in that direction his friend could lend him no assistance, and there was not time for hesitation ; he must get out of France as he best could.

At Florence he met with an English Roman Catholic family, who had gone abroad for the education of their daughters, and were since detained there by

the dangers and difficulties of travelling in the then state of the Continent. From this family he learnt that the grandmother had become a rich widow just before their departure from England; that her husband, Lord Walbroke, had left a considerable part of his property in her own power; and that she had neither child, nor, as far as they knew, any near connexions. This intelligence greatly increased the ~~value~~ ~~of~~ the Chevalier at the impossibility he had found of emigrating to England with his helpless charge; and all that now remained was to cultivate the good-will of those who, at a future period, might be of use in obtaining for her such desirable protection.

Adelaide, at that time between twelve and thirteen years of age, was an extremely lovely attractive child, with an intelligence greatly beyond her years. She had been her father's idol; he was *un esprit fort*, and friendly to the ori-

ginal revolution; but not quite up to (*d la hauteur*, as they called it, of) its subsequent atrocities, he had emigrated and joined the Prince of Condé. He valued himself upon a complete exemption from what he deemed prejudices, and had been in the habit of frequently sending for his daughter home from her Parisian convent, that he might early impress upon her mind the beauty and pure principles of moral virtue. With her religion he gave himself no concern, leaving that to her confessor; and her uncle being equally liberal in his opinions on this head, the poor child continued to do in Italy as she had done in France, attended punctually to the telling of her beads, kept the fasts enjoined by the still less enlightened spiritual director, on whom the care of her conscience now devolved, and troubled herself no farther about the matter. Her naturally enquiring and enthusiastic mind would probably not have remained long satisfied without better information

on the momentous subject, but for a circumstance which soon occurred to draw her thoughts into another channel ; this was the admission of a *pensionnaire*, who was a lineal descendant of the family immortalised by the love of Pétrarch. The young enthusiast had imbibed the very essence of Platonism in her admiration of the passion inspired by her great-great-great-grandmother, Laura ; she quickly selected Adelaide from among her companions, as the most capable of understanding her rhapsodies and refinements, and they became inseparable.

This visionary superstructure, raised upon the groundwork of pure moral virtue, previously inculcated by her father, took complete possession of Adelaide's mind. Pétrarch's sonnets became *her* breviary also, and a system of ethics so sublime arose to view, as perfectly dazzled their young imaginations, to the utter preclusion of all suspicion of its fallacy.

She quickly excited a deep interest in the Oldham family ; they were very worthy people, limited in fortune, but zealous in doing acts of kindness, and were earnestly solicitous to convey tidings of Adelaide's existence to Lady Walbroke ; but the letters remaining unacknowledged, left them in doubt as to their having ever reached their destination : and years thus rolled on, till at length a friend undertook the safe conveyance of the intelligence, as well as ascertaining the manner in which it should be received. The report was not favourable.

Lady Walbroke was between sixty and seventy : she had passed through life very much to her own satisfaction and that of the world ; well-born, and educated in the highest style of fashion, she had done credit to Lord Walbroke's ample fortune ; that is, she had borne her share in every tonish vagary, — opened her house in every way that could make her

popular ; always paying the strictest regard to appearances, and the *qu'en dira-t-on ?* and she continued to be courted and invited, although no longer an ornament to an assembly or ball-room. She had hours of solitude, however, which her habits of dissipation had not furnished her with the means of enlivening, and to relieve these, she had made choice of an humble companion ; this girl had acquired sufficient influence over her to check all thoughts of taking charge of a foreign grandchild, whose education she concluded moreover must have remained incomplete, and would be likely to devolve a task upon her for which she had not more taste than ability. Her own daughter (Adelaide's mother) had been placed in a convent of high repute at Paris for her finishing polish, and for the purpose of keeping her at a distance from interfering with the gay peeress's pretensions to youth and beauty ; the consequence very naturally was, that she



formed an attachment for the brother of one of the *pensionnaires*, her particular friend, and married him in spite of her parents' prohibition. This Lady Walbroke deeply felt, and never forgave.

The disastrous fate of the Marquise d'Hauteroche reawakened indeed some maternal feelings, in the fulness of which it is probable she might have been inclined to take charge of her orphan, had she then known of her existence. But these compunctious visitings had again subsided before the intelligence from the Oldhams reached her, and her companion was skilful in the art of allaying them, if any such betrayed themselves. The young favourite, however, became by degrees too assuming; a quarrel finally occurred, which ended in separation, and Lady Walbroke's thoughts now turned towards her natural relation, of whose charms and accomplishments indirect rumours had reached her, in consequence of the friendly zeal of the

good Oldhams, in introducing Adelaide to any distinguished travellers that visited Florence.

Her ladyship, therefore, thought proper to intimate her most gracious change of mind, accompanied by some not very happy excuse for her previous holding back, which was, however, readily admitted by friends, too eager for the event to be inclined to cavil at the means of its accomplishment.

Adelaide answered the letter in surprisingly good English, her friends having bestowed due pains upon her acquisition of a language which they never relinquished the hope might one day become her own; but her uncle was by no means satisfied with her composition, "so far," he said, "from breathing the humble gratitude it ought to express." Servility was in no shape suited to Adelaide's disposition or character; she had been sensibly wounded by the utter disregard shown for her destitute condition by so

near a relation, and she could not stoop to flattery. “ If her grandmother’s protection could only be secured at that price, she preferred devoting her days,” she said, “ to the austerities of a convent, though far from having a taste for monastic seclusion.” In vain did her friends join in wishing her to satisfy her uncle, by only throwing in some little adulatory strokes, which their knowledge of Lady Walbroke assured them would be well received ; Adelaide was firm where she thought herself right ; she only complied so far with the wish of the Chevalier as to give a more elegant *tour de phrase* to the obedience she was ready to show to her grandmother’s will, which she had perhaps worded somewhat too drily in the first instance, and thus the letter went.

It produced the desired effect, however ; Lady Walbroke was a more competent judge of elegance than of feeling ; she was agreeably surprised with Ade-

laide's proficiency in English, her language, except in the occasional recurrence of a French idiom, being grammatically correct; her readiness to obey her grandmother's orders to the best of her power, strongly and well expressed, was all the old lady looked for, and she wrote back an immediate answer, enjoining her to set out by the very earliest opportunity.

But to this an unforeseen and distressing impediment occurred. The Chevalier, whose health had continued too precarious to admit of his joining any of the *émigré* corps as he had wished to do, became suddenly worse, and he was seized with a paralytic stroke just before the arrival of the letter. No power could have induced his niece to let any selfish consideration interfere with her attendance upon him, to whom she was conscious of owing so much. A most desirable opportunity of conveyance was offered her by a family returning to Eng-

land, and her good friends, in their eagerness to have her embrace it, would have taken the Chevalier into their own house, and devoted themselves to the most unremitting attendance upon him. Adelaide felt the kindness deeply, but could not be persuaded to relinquish a duty equally prompted by affection and gratitude. In vain did they urge the danger of Lady Walbroke losing patience, and receding from her present intentions. “ You ought to despise me, my dear friends, as I would do myself, if I could be influenced by so selfish considerations,” was her answer.

The Chevalier\* lingered for some months, during which his niece was indefatigable in her assiduous attentions, and Lady Walbroke fortunately admitted the validity of the plea which delayed her departure. As soon as Adelaide was sufficiently recovered from the effect of her relation's death, she was consigned to the care of the captain of a

vessel sailing from Leghorn, who was connected with the Oldhams; and attended by an old faithful servant of the d'Hauteroche family, named Pierre, who had followed the Chevalier in his emigration, she took her passage to England, and arrived in safety at her grandmother's.

Lady Walbroke was instantly captivated by the elegant person and manners of the young stranger, now between seventeen and eighteen years of age, whose superior and highly-cultivated intellect was well calculated to confirm the prepossession her appearance excited. Much of ornamental literature, both French and Italian, having been supplied by her uncle, her conversational talents enlivened many an hour that would have hung heavy with the dowager; she began to feel for her something like real interest and attachment, and it was not long before she formed the determination of constituting the heretofore-neglected

orphan, sole heiress to all her disposable property : with a view to which purpose she proceeded to have her duly naturalized, and informed her at the same time she must change her religion, for she could not endure a Roman Catholic. Adelaide's opinions on that subject partook so much of the liberality professed both by her father and her uncle, that she readily assured her ladyship she could have no difficulty in becoming whatever was most agreeable to her, and the process was made as easy as possible. Nothing more was required, Lady Walbroke said, than accompanying her to church every Sunday morning, where the admirable discourses she would hear, would afford all the instruction that was necessary. To do Adelaide justice, however, it must be said, that for the first few Sundays she gave her whole attention to the preacher, as she would have done on any subject equally new to her ; but he unfortunately happened to be a young

man who had merely taken orders because there was a good living in the gift of his family, to which he looked forward, having in the meanwhile accepted the curacy of a fashionable chapel, to accustom him to feel at his ease in the pulpit, where the chief merit of his discourses consisted in their brevity ; for as to their matter, Lady Walbroke had assumed its value from the toleration of a very tonish audience ; she herself, good soul, being in the laudable habit of securing that quiet quarter of an hour for a gentle doze, to recruit her spirits for the subsequent gossiping avocations of the day. No wonder, therefore, that the proselyte soon became inattentive to what was not in reality worth listening to, and satisfied herself with taking it all upon trust.

Her old servant, Pierre, however, was considerably distressed at her change of religion, as it was called ; “because every good Catholic,” he said, “knew that



there was but one road to Heaven, and no heretic could ever find it." Adelaide assured him there were many ; *que tout cela revenoit au même*, provided people were morally good, and obedient to their parents. She was following the injunctions of her uncle, and begged him to be comforted." Adelaide believed what she asserted ; of an energetic mind, unshackled by religious instruction, she had formed a moral code of her own, which she expected would prove efficient to meet every difficulty in life ; as yet, her trials had not been such as to invalidate her confidence in its powers.

## CHAP. II.

LADY WALBROKE was in the habit of passing a part of every summer with a family in Staffordshire, to which her late husband was not very distantly related. London was now thinning fast; amusements falling short; and her ladyship, impatient to produce her lovely charge to her old friends, determined to anticipate the usual time of her annual visit to Hawkwood Manor, the ancient seat of the Delmaines.

Sir Arthur Delmaine had, in his youth, been in some degree thrown upon the protection of Lord Walbroke. Being a son of a younger brother, the means for his education were not adequate to his father's wish of qualifying him to make his way in the world with that distinc-

tion for which his talents eminently fitted him. Lord Walbroke had supplied those means, and followed up his kindness by using his interest to obtain for him a diplomatic situation. He was appointed secretary to the embassy at Paris, where his splendid endowments, elegant manners, and very handsome person, placed him in a light so conspicuous, as would speedily have raised him to higher steps in that brilliant career; had not his thoughts been suddenly turned into a different channel by the death of his uncle, which, followed very shortly by that of the son who had succeeded him, left Sir Arthur heir to the family property. His affections having early been engaged to an amiable young woman in his own country, he immediately determined to return home, offer her his hand, and, relinquishing all foreign ideas, to settle on his paternal acres, and command an English country-gentleman; a character he had ever held in great

respect. His offer was accepted with corresponding affection : and a matrimonial felicity ensued, which continued uninterrupted ; the birth of two lovely daughters completed it.

To Lady Walbroke, as the widow of his benefactor, the whole family paid all the attention that gratitude could inspire. Adelaide received such a welcome as her charms and accomplishments must entitle her to, wherever she came among those who were qualified to appreciate the very superior union of talents and graces she possessed ; blended withal, with a simplicity of mind, and ignorance of evil, in striking contrast with her refined manners and cultivated understanding.

“ You will find her phraseology a little uncouth,” said the old lady, after introducing her ; “ but I bring her to a good school, and shall trust to her being perfected both in her pronunciation and idiom, before I present her, which I mean to do next winter.”

“ We shall almost feel reluctant to correct her pretty foreign accent, which we have just been agreeing the soft tones of her voice give such a peculiar charm to,” replied Julia, the eldest daughter.

“ Oh no ! I pray you to make me as English as it is possible ; I should be proud of it always, but now it is not even a compliment to desire it ; my own country is lost.”

Adelaide was here in her element, delighting and delighted ; enjoying in the highest degree the unqualified approbation she met with on all sides ; for it must be confessed, she was far from insensible to the gratification of feeling the impression she produced. She was indulged also in the uncontrolled command of a well-furnished library, of which Sir Arthur had given her the key ; had he added to it some friendly caution to guide her in her studies, the gift would have been invaluable ; but here,

alas! the young enthusiast was left to herself, and consequences that might have been foreseen ensued. So far from proving a benefit, this unlucky indulgence served to foster the dangerous bias of her mind; French philosophy and German sentiment were eagerly resorted to, and combined their bewildering sophistry to mislead an understanding which, rightly directed, might have attained to the summit of female excellence.

A friendship was speedily formed between Adelaide and Julia, whose simple affectionate disposition was highly attractive, and her humble opinion of her own acquirements rendered her a docile pupil, and ready convert to her friend's seductive tenets.

The domestic circle received an interesting addition at the Cambridge vacation, by the arrival of Augustus Stanmore, a ward of Sir Arthur's.

“ You do not seem as much struck

with Augustus as I expected," said Julia to Adelaide, on their return from a morning's ride, which he had enlivened by very playful agreeable conversation.

"Every one does appear at so much disadvantage near your father," replied Adelaide, "that it must take time to discover their merits."

Sir Arthur's appearance was, indeed, peculiarly striking; there was just enough of foreign ease superadded to his naturally graceful commanding figure, to constitute the perfect fine gentleman; a countenance of great expression, where sense and benevolence were happily blended; an obligingness of attention that extended to all around; added to this, the extreme temperance of his habits gave him a youthful look, that frequently brought him into comparison with those whose years bore none to his; he was, however, still fairly to be considered as in his meridian, having married so young, that although he had a

daughter of seventeen, he was not much turned of forty. Enthusiastic in all her feelings, and wholly unconscious that there might be reasons which should impose a restraint on her giving way to them, Adelaide had, from the first moment she beheld him, been impressed with the high degree of admiration she now so naturally expressed.

Julia wondered. Her father, however superior in personal accomplishments to most people, was still, in her eyes, an old married man, whom she did not conceive any young person could name in competition — as, in fact, nothing she had yet seen appeared to her worthy of being compared — with Augustus, who, on his part, had been as much struck with Adelaide as he had been told he would be. “Indeed,” poor Julia observed, with a sigh, “no two people ever seemed so exactly suited to each other; and she hoped,” — she did not very well know what; she had some difficulty in finish-



ing the sentence ; but, “ certainly Adelaide would have so fine a fortune, and Augustus was deserving of every thing.”

The intention of making her granddaughter her heir, was dwelt upon by Lady Walbroke, whenever occasion offered ; but she did not foresee the circumstance was likely to take place so soon as it chanced.

In the midst of the gaieties that a very good neighbourhood constantly afforded the young people, care was always taken to secure a quadrille-table for the old lady, at which she one evening suddenly dropped down, in the midst of a pathetic lamentation over the loss of a *sans prendre*, and never spoke more.

There is something so awful in being thus snatched away to an eternity so little thought of, that the event made a strong impression, however slight the interest excited by the person herself, during her life.

Adelaide was inexpressibly shocked ;

for her grandmother's kindness to her had inspired her with feelings of very sincere affection, as well as of gratitude : but the devout sentiments so distressing an event might have been expected to awaken, were too remote from her moral code to have any share in assuaging her grief for her loss ; and as to the suggestions of Lady Delmaine and her daughters, she considered them as originating in views so partial and narrow, as to be but little entitled to attention, and she remained for a length of time in a state of deep and uncontrolled affliction.

Sir Arthur was, by Lady-Walbroke's will, constituted her guardian ; and this was the first source of consolation to which her thoughts turned : she was, now, certain of remaining till the age of twenty-one in his family, for so the testatrix enjoined ; and no prospect could have afforded her equal satisfaction. Sir Arthur, amidst his various political and agricultural avocations, was so much en-

grossed, as to have hitherto confined his civilities to her very much within the bounds of his habitual politeness. Her *present distress*, however, called up an interest which led him to an increase of soothing attentions, of which she was but too sensible ; but such arguments as, coming from him, might have produced a salutary effect it did not occur to him to offer : he trusted to time and her own reason for subduing her grief, and they did not disappoint his expectation.

In the course of the summer, she recovered a great degree of calmness ; and various agreeable autumnal excursions to the objects worthy of admiration in the neighbourhood, insensibly obliterated the remaining traces of sorrow, and restored her spirits to their natural lively tone.

During the continuance of Augustus Stanmore's vacation, his admiration had rapidly grown into a fervent passion ; not certainly from any encouragement it received from Adelaide, for she treated

him with bare civility, and his attentions with the utmost indifference, sincerely wishing Julia to be the object of the affection he was throwing away upon her.

The meeting of parliament brought the family to their town residence in Brook Street, and introduced their young inmate to two new characters, who were soon summoned to the friendly board to which they had long been in the habit of resorting without invitation, whenever it suited their pleasure or convenience.

One of these was Lady Barbara Strickland, aunt to Lady Delmaine, and the other Sir John Dartford, a general officer, and distant connexion of Sir Arthur's. Lady Barbara was a woman of commanding stature, haughty demeanour, and sarcastic expression of countenance, who valued herself upon her penetration, and the never being deceived by appearances. She was one of those amiable people, so bent on establishing their in-

fallibility, that having foretold the most calamitous event in nature, they would rather have it happen than their prognostic prove erroneous. Her prejudice was strong against the French, whether of the old or new *régime* ; and she no sooner heard of an *émigrée* being domesticated in the Delmaine family, than she foresaw “ mischief would come of it.” Adelaide took fright at her from the first day she beheld her.

The General was something of a humourist, who had lived too much in the gayest circles to form a very favourable estimate of the fair sex ; he was, however, inclined to judge of them with indulgence, which was a weakness that could on no occasion be laid to the charge of her ladyship.

Their curiosity had been strongly excited by the accounts given them of the young heiress. Her first *début* in the drawing-room before dinner defied the critical acumen even of Lady Barbara ;

she was obliged to confess, that a more graceful, engaging address and manner could not well be conceived, than that of the lovely being who now bespoke her good-will with a modest sweetness that might have disarmed malice itself; but Lady Barbara was on her guard against French insinuation and insincerity, and soon began, in her way, to see through it.

“When is this budding perfection to be offered to the gaze of an admiring world?” asked the General, the direction of his eye marking to whom he alluded.

“I intend to present her at the first drawing-room,” said Lady Delmaine.

“From my heart I do hope not,” cried Adelaide.

“What do you mean?” Lady Delmaine asked.

“She means to give us a specimen of humility and sincerity in the same breath,” said Lady Barbara, in a half-whisper to Lady Delmaine (but not un-

heard by the object of her sarcasm) ; “ humility in taking to herself such palpable flattery, which might as well have been intended for Julia ; and sincerity in a pretended reluctance for what every girl is eagerly panting for.”

“ I have never found her otherwise than sincere at any time ; and for humility she has no great occasion, — it would almost sound like affectation in her ;” was the reply of Lady Delmaine, whose partiality for her husband’s ward was very great.

“ The direction of the General’s eyes did not leave me to doubt of his meaning, madam,” said Adelaide ; “ and I did think I was giving some proof of humility in submitting to be treated so much like a silly child, as such a great compliment did indicate ; for I have read in one of your authors, that ‘ a man who flatters a woman to her face, expects to find her a fool, or to make her so.’ ”

“What! a French woman, and object to flattery! a phenomenon indeed.”

“From a Frenchman I should take it as a matter of course; but from an Englishman, I fear it must be that he does attribute some weak vanity to me.”

“Well, I must give you credit for that sentiment, however, Mademoiselled’Hauteroche,” said Lady Barbara, with more good humour than was habitual to her.

“And *I* stand corrected,” said the General; “you shall not accuse me of treating like a fool again, one so superior to the daily bread of your sex.”

“Am I to accept of a compliment at the expence of my whole sex, for proof of your amendment? This is worse and worse.”

“Why you must gag me, I believe, if I am not to utter my thoughts, for by heaven I can’t controul them! You have bewitched me, I verily think.”

“It is no more than she has done by us all,” said Sir Arthur; “so we



may make common cause against her spells."

Adelaide blushed to her very fingers' ends: a compliment from her guardian was of such rare occurrence, and such inestimable value as almost to overpower her.

"I have heard of a charmed life," said Lady Barbara; "but I am sure she has need of a charmed head to stand all this; and I should prove myself her best friend by administering a little wholesome truth now and then."

Adelaide's ideas had been thrown into such confusion as would not admit of their being immediately rallied: she remained silent.

"But what *did* you mean," resumed Lady Delmaine, "by hoping so strenuously that I should not present you?"

"I did mean the anxious wish to wait till Julia might be presented at the same time. I have much to do both in German and drawing this winter as well as

she has, and we should be quite separated, which would destroy the pleasure and the zeal of both; by coming out together next year, we shall not be divided, neither in our pursuits nor in our pleasures."

"It is the desire of conforming to Lady Walbroke's intentions that makes me urge it," returned Lady Delmaine; "you know, my dear, eighteen was the age she has fixed for it."

"But Adelaide's reasons for the delay are really good," said Sir Arthur; "we have not masters at command in summer, to make amends for the neglect of giving a finishing hand to her accomplishments this winter, and my voice is against the presentation."

This second approval from her guardian was almost too much for Adelaide's spirits, — her eyes filled, — ~~she could~~ not attempt to speak.

She had not deviated from the strictest truth in the reasons she had alleged,

for she sincerely loved Julia ; but there was one feeling predominant over every other, which she had not thought it necessary to state : her guardian was no frequenter of clubs, — he was a domestic man, — and when the business of the House ended so as to admit of it, he usually brought home with him a member or two to dinner, and the evening was passed in the bosom of his family ; and this was what no pleasure the great world had to offer could have compensated the loss of to Adelaide. She felt happy throughout the course of this winter, beyond her utmost conception of happiness ; basking in the sunshine of her guardian's favour, who loved her and treated her on the footing of his own daughters. He filled her whole mind, occupied her every thought ; whatever she did was in the hope of meeting his approbation ; and it could not with justice have been withheld, for she excelled in whatever she undertook. Alas ! alas ! that the want

of that one thing needful to give stability to virtue, should have been on all hands so cruelly overlooked; and poor Adelaide, in the unconsciousness of her own deficiency in that principle, which not only enjoins self-controul, but supplies the power to exert it, been allowed to cherish feelings pregnant with the seeds of errors, at the very name of which she would have shuddered! But religion was seldom thought of or treated of in the family, beyond the decent respect paid to Sunday duties; in which Adelaide bore her share, even to attending both morning and afternoon service in the country, where the Sabbath-day was apt to hang on hand. Lady Delmaine was an extremely amiable, well-disposed woman, yet with an indolence of character which too readily led her to take things for granted, and thus occasionally to stop short in very momentous concerns. Her children had been taught their cate-

chism ; been confirmed in due time ; received the sacrament at the proper age ; and she believed them sufficiently instructed. Nature had endowed them with good dispositions, and she saw no cause to suppose any thing more wanting. Adelaide's not having been confirmed never occurred to her : she had enquired whether she meant to stay for the communion the first Sunday the opportunity offered after her incorporation into the family, and Adelaide, feeling very sure she must be right in doing like the rest, assented without difficulty ; so there the matter ended, and it was again taken for granted that all was as it should be. Sir Arthur, although connecting the idea of church and state firmly together, and making a point of adhering to every external form, still in fact turned his thoughts little farther into the subject than most men of the world and of much worldly business are apt to do,

and devolved this very serious responsibility, as far as it regarded his children, entirely upon his wife, whose exemplary conduct had ever borne testimony to the rectitude of her principles.

## CHAP. III.

ADELAIDE was most sincerely attached to every individual of the family in which she deemed herself so highly fortunate to be placed ; but for Sir Arthur she was fast verging to entertain a species of idolatry, which she saw no cause for disguising, believing it, in the innocence and inexperience of her breast, to be altogether compatible with her moral duties : he realised her ideas of perfection, and she asked no more of fate than to be permitted to contemplate it for ever.

“ Pray,” said Charlotte one day after dinner to her mother, “ what is meant by Platonism, that Julia and Adelaide are always talking about ? ”

“ The hypocrisy of virtue,” said Lady Barbara Strickland, as Lady Delmaine mo-

mentarily hesitated for an answer ; “ a veil thrown over unhallowed inclinations,” she added, with a sarcastic and scrutinizing glance at Adelaide, whose eyes were just then rivetted in deep thought on the countenance of her guardian.

“ Your ladyship’s definition is severe,” said the General ; “ I think it may more fairly be termed the *mirage* of sentiment, from its tendency to delude the unwary it attracts.”

“ O, what a profanation,” exclaimed Adelaide, “ of the most sublime and refined feelings of human nature ! When you do know enough Italian, Charlotte, thoroughly to understand Petrarca, you will find the platonic affection means an union of souls in their most perfect purity, such as the angels should envy, if, indeed, it does not constitute their own felicity.” She spoke with enthusiasm, and an appealing look to her guardian for his approbation.



“Platonics gain but little credit in these days,” was his quiet reply.

“I think you could not in possibility say a more severe satire on the times than by that observation,” returned his ward.

And with inimitable grace she began repeating that beautiful sonnet \* —

“ S’ una fede amorosa, un cor non finto, &c.”

Lady Barbara did not understand Italian, had no taste for poetry, and reprobated quotations of all kinds, as pedantic and affected. With a supercilious sneer, “Admirably *acted*, I must acknowledge,” she said; “a very *Corinne*! But I should, however, recommend it to my nieces to reserve those superhuman refinements for that more exalted state of existence you have alluded to, *Mademoiselle d’Hauteroche*; and advise them in the meanwhile, as mere sublunary mor-

tals, to defer to received opinions. Young people who set themselves in opposition to the world, may provoke consequences they little dream of."

The votary of Plato was silent, because unwilling to exasperate the old lady, whose displeasure was evident; but a look of mutual understanding between the young friends, implied that their favourite system was not to be so easily relinquished. Had "the milk of human kindness" borne any proportion in Lady Barbara's nature to the gall in which it abounded, and induced her to extend a friendly hand, as well as a warning voice at this period of her clear perception of the threatening danger, much mischief might have been averted, for Adelaide's ingenuous mind was open to every good seed that could have been sown in it; but satire is not the most happy mode of redeeming us from error.

The General endeavoured to turn the

discussion into a laugh, by adverting to an anecdote he had picked up abroad, of Petrarch's excessive fondness for turnips, which some one had humourously said, "might be considered as the platonics of eating."

This succeeded ; and Charlotte did not find herself much enlightened by the solution of her query.

"Do you know, Julia," said Charlotte one day to her sister, "that I begin not to love Adelaide as well as I did at first."

"Why? what has she done to displease you?"

"Nothing to *me*; but I overheard aunt Barbara tell mamma, that she was sure she would prove the bane of all our happiness."

"You know how severe her judgments always are, and I am sure she took a dislike to dear Adelaide from the first moment ; and besides she is always warn-

ing us against her German sentimentalism; so I dare say she only said that because you were within hearing."

"No, indeed, Julia, they did not know I was there; for I was getting my lesson in the *boudoir*, and they were in the dressing-room with the door open."

"Then I am sure, Charlotte, you did very wrong in not giving notice of your being within hearing, when you found their conversation was confidential; and now you are punished for it by becoming unjust, and that will soon lead you to feeling unhappy."

"Then you would not think me unjust if you had heard all she said—"

"But I don't desire to hear it," interrupted Julia, "and I hope mamma didn't mind her; for Adelaide loves mamma so much, that if she were to see the least displeasure in her, it would make her very wretched indeed."

"Well, I do wonder at you, Julia, if it were for nothing more than her at-

tracting Augustus as she did during the vacation. I began not to like her for that ; he seemed always to be so fond of you till she came, and I am sure there is nothing you loved better than him."

" I am not changed in that respect, Charlotte ; but I can't wonder that Augustus should see her pre-eminence over every human being ; and certainly it was not *she* that sought to attract him, for she never troubled her head about him, and I could almost feel angry with her for that."

" Why, would you wish their love mutual, and have them marry?"

" No ; but Adelaide intends never to marry, and platonic love is not so exclusive as other love : people may love more than one in a platonic way."

" Well, I am sure I have never been able to make out what platonic means ; but aunt Barbara asserts it is all deceit, and that Adelaide is a compound of art and affectation, and will never rest sa-

tified till she has gained papa's affections, and made us all wretched."

"How cruel in her to say so, and how very unjust! I'm certain mamma wouldn't believe her."

"No; I don't think she did: she said her opinion of Adelaide would not be easily shaken, and still less, should she ever distrust papa after so many years of tried affection; and then I didn't quite understand what they said besides, but mamma was more angry than ever I knew her to be with aunt before, and Lady Barbara went away in great wrath, and saying, 'the creature is made up of deceit and wiles, and would prove her words when it would be too late.'"

Adelaide, however, meant no deceit, nor ever deceived any one, poor girl, but herself. Julia considered it a duty of friendship to impart the suspicions to which her undisguised admiration of her guardian laid her open.

When she did so, Adelaide did not

express much surprise at Lady Barbara's misconstructions; "she had not sufficient refinement to understand such feelings, but to the pure in mind all was pure," she said : — " If I may but one day be deemed worthy to be admitted by your father to the unlimited intimacy of friendship, my utmost ambition will be contented ; but, indeed, it is great cruelty in Lady Barbara to try to prejudice your dear mother against me : you, who know my heart, Julia, do know how sincerely I love and respect her — how very far I feel myself from wishing to interfere with his love for her ; but, for a certainty, she has too much of generosity to grudge me the participation of his friendship, if I can ever be so blest as to appear to him worthy of it."

Julia did not doubt her mother's being much too generous to be inclined to check so innocent a gratification, and was satisfied. The consequences of this conversation were, an increased dread in

the mind of Adelaide of Lady Barbara's scrutinizing glances, and a strong determination to guard carefully against betraying her sentiments in her presence; but this was easier to propose than to execute.

The return of Augustus for the vacation was shortly expected; but the impatient fervour of his passion caused him to frame some plea for obtaining leave to anticipate the stated time, and he one day made his unlooked-for appearance just as the family had sat down to table, Lady Barbara being of the party. A sudden thought darted into Adelaide's head, that by giving him an *accueil* more than commonly gracious, she might direct Lady Barbara's observations into a different course, and ward off the cruel constructions she was so prone to put upon her innocent attachment to her guardian; and, without one moment's consideration of what she was involving herself or others in, this child of impulse



set about acting a part for which, to her praise be it spoken, she had no talent at all ; and so greatly did she overdo the matter, as to fail completely of the end proposed, and instead of blinding Lady Barbara, awakened suspicions far more injurious than any she had yet harboured.

The surprise had been great to all — attended with dismay to poor Julia, but productive of absolute intoxication to Augustus, whose heart and soul were devoted to this object of his first passion ; for of Julia he had never thought in any other way than as an affectionate brother and play-mate. Some looks of keen investigation were now bestowed by her prognosticating ladyship upon Sir Arthur, whom she from this moment began to include in her surmises ; — but Sir Arthur afforded no scope for observation.

Eager to dispel the alarm of Julia, Adelaide hastened after her, and draw-

*ing her into her own apartment, "Dearest friend!" she cried, "forgive, if I have caused you some uneasiness:—I have no meaning at all to Mr. Stanmore; but it did at once come into my head to appear as if I had; to make Lady Barbara give over such unjust taunts about my guardian."*

Julia stated the cruelty to Augustus of thus raising his hopes; but Adelaide assured her she should be careful to save him from being deceived, by behaving with the most discouraging reserve whenever Lady Barbara was out of the question; and Julia, who feared nothing so much as to urge what might be construed into selfishness, forbore to say all she might have said upon such disingenuous conduct;—indeed, in that light it did not so forcibly strike her, for she could not even imagine a fault in her friend.

Sir Arthur, on his part, was perfectly

unconscious of having made any impression on his ward beyond the extreme deference she showed to his opinion upon every occasion, and with this he could not but be well pleased. He had observed the growing passion of Augustus, and did not wish to check it : the match was every way suitable, if the young people liked each other ; and he left the matter to take its course. He was now satisfied the attachment was reciprocal, and believed the suddenness of her lover's unexpected arrival had thrown her off her guard, and been the means of betraying what maiden modesty had before concealed.

“ Well, Julia ! ” Charlotte exclaimed, the moment she found herself alone with her sister ; “ I hope you are convinced *now* of the duplicity of Adelaide in pretending not to care for Augustus.”

“ I have not changed my opinion,” replied Julia ; “ I only wish Augustus

knew all that I do, that he might not deceive himself; — but I am not at liberty to explain.”

“ Then I’m sure *I* will, if I can but discover what —. If she only behaves so from coquetry it is still more abominable, and she will exactly turn out as aunt Barbara says, ‘ a snake in the grass.’ I actually begin to hate her.”

“ You are cruelly unjust, Charlotte! I assure you, she is anxiously solicitous for the happiness of us all; and I dare say she will soon take an opportunity of explaining herself to poor Augustus, who is the only person in danger of being made unhappy by mistaking her meaning, and that would indeed go to my heart.” A deep sigh followed these words; and Charlotte felt too angry to pursue the conversation.

Adelaide sincerely wished to give the explanation which should save a misconception on the part of Augustus; — but how to do it? Could she tell him, that

she was cherishing sentiments for her guardian which would not bear the light? Impossible! — What must he think of her? for, though quite assured there was nothing wrong in her feelings, — had she not been told, and by Sir Arthur himself, that Platonic affection gained no credit in these days, and Augustus might not have a mind of sufficient delicacy to understand her.

She consulted with her friend; “ Could not you, Julia, contrive to give him a hint?” she said.

“ How could I possibly?” asked Julia; “ from *me*, you know it would look so; — he might suppose that — oh, I never could, indeed; and, besides, I could not bear to make him so very unhappy, — and, besides, — what could I say?”

“ Why, nothing that you need be so agitated about; you could tell him that I have some particular reasons to behave as I do before Lady Barbara; but that I mean nothing in the world to him by it.

“ But if he should suppose that I was wishing to degrade you in his eyes by such an imputation of duplicity, either from envy, or — or — ”

“ O, Julia ! am I, indeed, acting the degrading part of duplicity ? — how you mortify me by the idea ! ” and Adelaide’s eyes filled, for she had not considered her plan of conduct so impartially, as to have taken in all its bearings ; however, she soon recovered from the dismay, the simplicity of her friend’s observations had occasioned, and said, “ but you, Julia, will not, I am sure, consider it duplicity ; you know, as well as me, that it is only to guard a pure sentiment from the cruel misconstructions of an ungenerous and unfeeling mind.”

“ But,” returned Julia, doubtfully ; “ if we are conscious of the innocence of our intentions, why should we not avow them ? Papa says, we may almost be sure there is something wrong in what we are studious to conceal.”

“ Indeed ! ” with a start of alarm ;  
“ but he could only mean it as a general  
remark ; — he would assuredly admit that  
there are cases of imperious exception.”

“ Julia would not press an argument,  
in which to make good her own conviction,  
was to give pain ; — she changed it  
to “ I fear poor Augustus will be exposed  
to suffer more than you are aware of  
from his delusive hopes. — Is there no  
way of saving him more certainly from  
deceiving himself ? Why should you not  
explain every thing to him ? — *he* is not  
ungenerous and unfeeling ; — he would  
not misunderstand you.”

“ Suppose that we do try him,” said  
Adelaide, “ the first opportunity of only  
we three being together, upon the sub-  
ject of Platonic love, and then I will be  
able to judge how far I may explain my-  
self to him.”

“ Yes, — we three, — it will be much  
better that Charlotte should not be by.”

“ Why ? ”

“ Because she is not quite fair upon that head ; she is sometimes apt to be biassed by aunt Barbara.”

It was not long before the opportunity they wished for offered ; and Julia, as well as Adelaide, discussed the subject with their accustomed enthusiastic warmth ; but Augustus, who had no taste for Platonics at all, and imagined, moreover, from the inequality of Adelaide's behaviour, that it was with a view to himself she was advocating the system, turned it into such excessive ridicule, that the friends were completely deterred from all idea of entering into the proposed explanation.



## CHAP IV.

AUGUSTUS STANMORE, at first intoxicated with delight, was now bewildered and wretched at the inconceivable variations in the conduct of Adelaide. He had taken his opinion of woman from books ; deep read in poetic lore, he had accustomed himself to consider that “ fair defect of nature ” in an indulgent light ; he repeated to himself, that “ to their weakness, half their charms they owe ; ” he could allow much for female caprice and maidenly coyness, but the inconsistency here, was past comprehension ; and he had more than once, after a week of such frigid treatment, as convinced him he was all but odious in her eyes, determined in despair upon seeking relief in absence, when a few hours passed

in the presence of Lady Barbara have again obtained him smiles so sweet, and converse so complacent, as to revive all his hopes, and lead him to question his own judgment, whether he had not mistaken for indifference, what was only to be imputed to true virgin modesty,

“That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,”

carried to excess, perhaps, in the fear that the presence of her young associates might not prove a sufficient protection against an embarrassing avowal on his part. So fertile is love in finding food for hope, and framing excuses for its object!

An explanation he could find no opportunity of seeking, because from Julia at least, Adelaide was never separate.

He was within a year of the age (twenty-five,) at which he was to come into possession of the estate left him by his uncle's will; and Sir Arthur wished him to travel during that period. Au-

gustus painted in strong colours his passion, and his uncertainties from Adelaide's *varying conduct*, and implored the interference of his guardian, to learn what he might hope from time and faithful affection, before he set out.

Sir Arthur, much displeased at what he deemed unpardonable coquetry in Adelaide, urged him to depart with a firm resolution to banish her from his thoughts. "Such levity of conduct," he said, "proved her undeserving of esteem, and once convinced of that, he should certainly withhold his sanction, as far as it went, to their union."

Augustus now entered into so strenuous a defence of her, and accusation of his own possible injustice in what he had stated, that he at length obtained a promise of the interference he had requested.

Sir Arthur sent to desire to see Mademoiselle d'Hauteroche in his study; the trepidation with which the summons

was obeyed may be readily conjectured ; it was the first time the circumstance had occurred.

He received her with more of constraint and gravity in his countenance, than she had yet seen, and it did not contribute to set her at ease ; he drew a chair near to his own for her ; she evidently trembled as she sat down, — her colour varied.

“ Compose yourself, my dear child,” he said, in a softened tone, feeling for her confusion ; “ you have not hitherto found me very harsh in my admonitions ; and perfect frankness on your part, will to a certainty command my utmost indulgence.”

No answer, but an uncontrollable burst of tears.

“ I see by this agitation, you anticipate the subject of the conference I have requested ; do not let it distress you — consider me as a tender parent,” taking

her hand, "and be assured you will ever find me act like one."

"It is your overpowering goodness, that — that — I cannot speak!"

"Young ladies find a difficulty of utterance on certain subjects, that does credit to their modesty, and which we men do not always know how to treat with the delicacy it deserves; shall I depute Lady Delmaine to enter upon this trying topic with you?"

"Oh, — no, no! — my confidence in you is unbounded quite."

"Then tell me, my dear, what hopes I may hold out to poor Augustus, who knows not how to understand—"

"O, none — none at all!" she impatiently replied.

"But if so very decided in your rejection, allow me to say, there is something very unlike the opinion I had formed of your disposition, in the encouragement you occasionally give him."

“ He should not take for encouragement, my speaking to him with the friendship and good humour I do to every one else of the family.”

“ He is not alone in the misconception, if such it be ; we have all believed we observed symptoms of partiality, which I should be grieved to set down to the account of coquetry.”

“ I entreat you to think not so ill of me ; I abhor coquetry ! If I am so sunk in your esteem as to believe me capable of it, I would not wish to live.”

“ Will you account then for the extraordinary variations of conduct that make him so wretched ?”

“ I did hope my almost always dry manner to him, would prove that I did not mean particular kindness at any time.”

“ Then why show it ?”

“ Indeed, I have very strong reasons,” she replied, with extreme embarrassment.

“ And such as cannot be confided to your guardian? What am I to think of them?”

“ *O! not ill of me, for pity’s sake! I cannot support the idea!*”

“ Adelaide, I know not what to make of you,” he said, with some little sternness.

“ Make of me whatever you can best approve; — to know your pleasure will be my sufficient law.”

“ I would not willingly dictate any sacrifice that could be distressing to you; but very certainly my affection for Augustus, and high opinion of him, have led me to wish him success in obtaining so bright a reward of his deserts, as it has hitherto appeared to me, your hand would bestow upon him.”

“ Any thing but that! — dictate to me any thing but that, and you shall see my implicit obedience.”

He could not help reverting to his original idea of unpardonable coquetry,

and somewhat angrily said, "If I am to be satisfied with reasons that cannot be explained, I at least must insist on a consistency of conduct that may merit my confidence; and since Augustus has nothing to hope, that no false hopes be again excited in him."

"Forgive but this one concealment, and be assured there never shall."

He now dismissed her with a feeling of more displeasure than that with which he had received her; and Adelaide retired to her own apartment, to give an uncontrolled vent to the most oppressive sensations she had yet experienced.

During this interview, the agitated lover had been pacing the drawing-room with rapid strides, in impatient expectation of the issue.

As Charlotte passed through it to her mother's dressing-room, she stopt to say, "Are you, indeed, going to leave us, Augustus?"



“ Such is your father’s decree, Charlotte.”

“ Dear me, how sorry I am ! What will become of Julia and me ?”

“ Would you could add another name to the enumeration of those that will miss me !”

“ Indeed I should be very sorry to be an abettor of such vile deceit, for I am sure she does not care for you at all, and only pretends it sometimes to —” (luckily checking an expression that might have betrayed Julia’s partiality to him, for Charlotte’s opinion was, that Adelaide was endeavouring to draw him from Julia to herself,) — “ to gratify her vanity.”

Heart-struck with the assertion of her not caring for him at all, he uttered a wild exclamation of, “ By heaven, I shall go mad !” and rushing hastily out of the room, took his station in the parlour adjoining Sir Arthur’s study, where

he could hear Adelaide's exit from it through the other door. When he, however, did hear her go, his resolution to meet the final award entirely failed him, and he threw himself breathless into an arm-chair, remaining like one transfixed.

In this state he was found by Julia, who had been sent with a message to her father from Lady Barbara. "Dear Augustus, you are ill!" she exclaimed, the moment she beheld him.

"No; only waiting a result I have not courage to encounter."

"Does it relate — is it any thing — do you wish to see Adelaide?" inquired Julia, turning deadly pale, and scarce able to articulate.

"O, dearest Julia! you, who are her friend, must know her thoughts — her feelings; one word from you would allay this distracting ——"

"Do you so little know me, Augustus," she interrupted, "as to suppose me capable of betraying confidence?"

At this moment the servant, who had been sent in quest of Augustus, came to say "that his master wanted him," and he precipitately bolted into the study, leaving the sensitive generous girl to feelings which entirely obliterated the *recollection of the embassy* on which she had been sent. The message, however, coming from Lady Barbara, whose slightest concerns could not at any time be overlooked with impunity, a messenger was speedily dispatched after Julia, with an enquiry, — whether her ladyship were to be kept waiting all day for an answer? — which compelled her to appear, with eyes sufficiently red and swollen, to betray that all was not well within.

She honestly said she had stopt for one moment in her way to speak to Augustus, whom she found almost fainting in the parlour; and before she could proceed to her father, a servant had come from him to summon Augustus into the study, upon business which she sup-

posed it would have been wrong to interrupt.

“ And have those precious drops been shed in sympathy with the peerless Adelaide’s grief for the loss of her stalking-horse, my pretty dupe?” her ladyship asked, with an air of the most provoking irony.

“ Indeed, Lady Barbara, it would be strange if the departure of Augustus did not grieve us all!” Julia replied, with more spirit than was usual to her, when attacked by her aunt.

“ It must be confessed her masked battery was not ill constructed for so young a proficient. I give her credit for it, at all events, and conclude it will now be followed up by a proper display of misery:—Are you prepared, child, with hartshorn, for the approaching moment of separation?”

Lady Delmaine seeing her daughter’s distress, interposed. “ Indeed, my dear aunt, you bear too hard upon Julia’s

young friend. I trust this very day will justify her from ever having merited the suspicion you harbour. Sir Arthur told me this morning he had promised *Augustus* to ascertain the real state of her feelings towards him, before his departure."

"I believe, my dear niece, the result will, on the contrary, prove that I am not very liable to be mistaken in my suspicions."

The agitation of Julia was visibly increased by what her mother said. She now clearly perceived the cause of *Augustus's* dismay, for she well knew what her friend's answer would be ; she felt the pangs he must suffer, at the same time that an unconscious gleam of hope stole into her soul at this final closing of his prospects with respect to *Adelaide* ; she turned red and pale by turns, and stood lost in thought.

"And behold how my predictions already begin to be fulfilled," continued

the provoking old sibyl, "in the misery this poor girl is at this moment enduring from that crafty witch. You have no eyes if you do not detect the 'worm i'th' bud,' that is feeding 'on *her* damask cheek.' Come, confess, pretty dear, has it not been robbed of its love?"

Julia, unable to answer, felt the tears trickling down her cheeks, and turned away to hide them.

"I really must acquit Julia of any such forwardness," again interposed Lady Delmaine. "I am perfectly satisfied nothing but the most fraternal affection has ever existed between Augustus and my girls; and so entire a reliance do I place in the open-heartedness of my children, that I am convinced, the instant they are conscious of a preference for any one, I shall be the first to whom it is imparted."

Julia felt this very unintentional reproof to her heart's core, and had not her dreaded aunt been present, an imme-

diate avowal of her hitherto concealed sentiments would have been the consequence of the compunction her mother's undeserved reliance on her frankness had awakened; for it was the shame of speaking which alone had tied her tongue; but she shrunk from Lady Barbara's severity: the encreased discomposure of her mind, however, was so manifest in her artless countenance, that the shrewd and unmerciful beldam burst into a violent fit of laughter.

“Heavens and earth, Matilda!” she cried, “do you come from the clouds, or the antediluvian world, with these primitive expectations of daughter's open-heartedness to their mothers, when their love tales can be poured into ears so much more indulgent, prepared almost from the nursery for the mutual soft confessions? I'd venture a good round bet, if Julia would be honest, that she could tell you of infantine amours and rivalry, dating from those hot-beds of sentiment, juve-

nile balls, that would not disgrace the page of some of our modern novels, however deeply she may guard her own secret."

"I have really never been the confidante of any such disclosures," Julia with some difficulty said. — Her mother seeing how painfully she was affected by these severe attacks, sought to break into them by observing, "We sent for you, my dear, because Lady Barbara was impatient for the answer from your father to her message."

Julia repeated, that his having just then sent for Augustus into his study, had prevented her intruding.

"Of course, when that important personage, Mr. Augustus Stanmore, is in question, Lady Barbara Strickland's concerns must give way," said the haughty lady. "You now understand the gradations of affection in your daughter's mind, I hope; ha! ha! ha!"



No longer able to stand all this, Julia ran out of the room.

“ Upon my life,” Lady Barbara went on ; “ I cannot choose but wonder at your determined blindness, Lady Delmaine, to what is passing before your eyes ; that foreign girl’s look at your husband would be quite sufficient information for any but yourself ; nay, the very tone of her voice in speaking to him —”

“ I have that perfect confidence in my husband’s integrity and affection for me, Lady Barbara, that were my eyes to bear testimony to any thing contrary to either, I should not credit them.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! of all the folly I have yet witnessed, this is the height ! Well, be it so ! and take the consequence. I wash my hands of it — but who will pity you, do you think, after such due warning ?”

“ I shall obtain pity when I seek it,

I make no doubt, and till then I certainly do not desire it. We will now, if you please, dispatch another messenger to Sir Arthur respecting your question ;” at the same time ringing the bell.

Lady Barbara shrugged up her shoulders, and remained in contemptuous silence.

## CHAP. V.

JULIA ran straight to her friend's apartment to seek for comfort under the vexations to which she had been exposed ; but Adelaide had no comfort to bestow ; she was absorbed in her own painful reflections.

“ O Julia ! dearest Julia ! ” she exclaimed, “ I am lost if you do not come to my succour.”

Julia instantly forgot her own grievances in her sympathy with those of her friend. “ Dear Adelaide, depend upon me ! ” she replied, “ what has happened ? ”

“ I am sunk — degraded in the esteem of your father ; and if you do not come to my rescue, I shall be in utter despair.”

“ What do you wish me to do ? ”

“ O to think of something that can be said without betraying the truth, to

justify the coquetry which he does impute to me, and which —”

“ Indeed, Adclaide,” returned Julia, sorrowfully, “ you ask me to do the only thing I could scruple to do to serve you ; I never could invent a subterfuge in my life, and I am very sure that if I could I would not.”

“ Be assured, Julia, I will never ask you to do a wrong action ; but, indeed, no action is reprehensible, that originates in a laudable motive ! You know, that truly I am not unworthy of esteem. You know that I did not intend wrong in what I did. I was prompted alone by the desire to save the purest of all sentiments from malicious interpretations.”

“ Indeed, Adelaide, papa has always inculcated upon us the direct contrary of the maxim you lay down ; he asserts that we may not commit a wrong action, even to answer a good end : — and here is a direct proof of how little good is

gained by deception, for, believe me, Lady Barbara is not blinded by it ; and I give you my word, it is not her fault if mamma does not judge as harshly as herself."

" Cruel friend ! you speak daggers to my already wounded mind ! What can I do ? What is to become of me ?" wringing her hands in agony.

" Dear Adelaide, I grieve to increase your distress ; but I can speak nothing but the truth ; rely, however, upon mamma's opinion of you being unshaken ! and why should you not avow to her sentiments so pure, at which you have no cause to blush ? Do you think she would grudge you my father's friendship ? Have you ever found any

" Weakness in her ?"

kind and mother is every thing that is she ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> excellent, and I love her as if my own, <sup>to</sup> own ; but if even she were and delicate <sup>there</sup> are feelings so refined, I could not tell them to

any one but yourself, whose mind is so pure and spotless."

"I almost wish I had not known them either, for I very much fear, that what so carefully shuns the light, must be in some way reprehensible: — do, dear Adelaide! let us not trust ourselves, but have recourse to older experience!"

"Oh, I am every way lost!" And she burst into a passion of tears, in which Julia most affectionately joined. After a time, Adelaide sobbed out, "Leave me, Julia, leave me, just now! we only make one another worse."

And Julia left her with a heavy heart, and very serious forebodings that her friend's code of morality was in some respect or other eminently defective.

Adelaide, when left to herself, could not devise any thing for the present to supply the place of Julia's aid, and remained disconsolate and wretched, heartily repenting of the folly of which she had in the first instance been guilty ;

she breathed a fervent vow to herself not to let any consideration, in future, ever again betray her into an act of duplicity.

During this time, Augustus Stanmore had heard his doom from Sir Arthur, not unaccompanied with admonition sage to bend the strength of his mind to conquer a passion which could promise no permanent happiness, even if returned by a being so inconsistent and capricious as he now deemed Adelaide to be. But the impetuous young man was not then in a state to hear reason : —overwhelmed with his disappointment, he determined upon instant departure, declared himself unable to see any of the family, and rushed out of the study half frantic, and shortly after out of the house, having only stopt to order his servant to make all necessary preparations and follow him to Harwich, for which place he set forth himself with the first coach he could meet with.

He had been some time gone, when

Lady Barbara's message was delivered to Sir Arthur, who had not quite recovered the vexation this scene had given him; but he went himself to answer her question. His looks bespoke him so ruffled as immediately to catch her attention and make her enquire into the cause; he was too well aware of her disposition to be willing to give scope to her malice; he simply replied, "that he was hurt at having been obliged to crush all poor Stanmore's hopes respecting Adelaide."

Lady Barbara cast an exulting glance on her niece.

"You surprise me," said Lady Delmaine, "I really thought she had liked him, and took it for granted the little apparent inequalities in her behaviour to him would be satisfactorily explained, whenever she was seriously called upon."

These "little apparent *inequalities*" were new to Lady Barbara, and afforded



fresh food for her speculations — she pondered for a moment in silence.

“She decidedly and in the most unqualified manner rejected his suit,” returned Sir Arthur.

“Not quite as much to your surprise, perchance, as to that of your lady,” observed the suspicious old woman, with one of her sarcastic scrutinizing looks.

“I have not turned my attention sufficiently to very young ladies, to be so expert in reading their minds,” he answered smiling : “I took my opinion on trust from my wife.”

“Indeed ! I should have thought you might have found other data to guide you ; Matilda never was famous for penetration that I can recollect.”

“Matilda’s confiding temper is among her most valuable attributes to me,” he answered with a slight feeling of provocation, though by no means taking in her drift.

“That I can readily suppose,” was

her reply ; and Sir Arthur checked any farther discussion, by turning to the question of business he had come to answer.

The abrupt disappearance of Augustus was an event of no slight interest in the family ; he was a favourite with every individual, from the highest to the lowest in it, and lamentations and conjectures abounded. Neither was the intelligence long in finding its way to the person of all others most deeply concerned ; and poor Julia, whose mind had been so seriously agitated and harassed throughout the morning, was thrown into fits by the unguarded communication. Lady Delmaine was of course summoned to her daughter's aid.

When she was sufficiently recovered to be reasoned with, her mother began a gentle expostulation on her readiness to give way to such a blamable excess of sensibility ; but Julia interrupted her with the exclamation of, " Dearest mam-

ma, your confiding kindness is more than I can bear; you know not how much more blamable I am than you have any suspicion of."

"What mean you, my child?"

"I have been guilty of concealment, for which I cannot forgive myself; and it makes me wretched."

"What concealment? You alarm me, Julia."

"Oh! my love for Augustus: — forgive, forgive me!"

"Your love for Augustus! You do indeed now astonish me! And is his passion for Adelaide all a pretence, while he has secretly been gaining your affections? What am I to think?"

"O! nothing wrong of him, indeed! the folly is all my own in devoting my affections to him, whilst his whole soul is Adelaide's."

"And is it possible I can be so deceived in her? Has she sought to supplant you with him, for the cruel

triumph of afterwards refusing him? I could not have believed it of her."

"Nor must you now: never for an instant did Adelaide wish to attract him: never for an instant did he profess love to me! I have no one to accuse but myself for any mortifications I may have to endure, and never shall I complain of them; it is my faulty reserve to you that I so deeply deplore: a sense of my duplicity struck to my very heart, mamma, when you said to Lady Barbara, that you were sure if ever your daughters felt a preference, you should be the first to whom it was confided. Oh, you cannot think how unworthy I felt myself: but indeed, indeed, it was only want of courage to speak that kept me silent, and at that instant I determined nothing should make me continue so; and if you will but forgive me now, my whole heart shall in future be as open to you as to myself;" and the tears of

contrition coursed one another down her cheeks.

“ My dear girl, compose yourself, and do not imagine I see any thing like duplicity in your reserve ; but, on the contrary, I place it to the account of true modesty, which cannot but shrink from the avowal of unsought and unreturned love.”

“ There again you give me credit beyond what I deserve ; for to Adelaide I have not only avowed, but gloried in it.”

“ Well, my child, if Adelaide there took place of your mother, though I feel sorry, I cannot wonder ; and your present sincerity atones for all ; but surely, then, Julia, your friend's conduct seems doubly reprehensible.”

“ Oh, no !” she interrupted, “ indeed she had no intention ; it was dread of Lady Barbara—” Julia suddenly stopped, finding she was in danger of betraying a secret not her own ; and Lady Delmaine

just then more occupied with her daughter's unfortunate prepossession than Adelaide's motives, did not at the moment advert to the expression, or the confused look with which she abruptly checked herself.

"However, my dear," continued Lady Delmaine, "I trust you have yet spoken in time to reap the benefit of maternal council, and that we shall not find it difficult to reduce feelings that could only lead to misery, within the bounds that Augustus's own conduct to you prescribes."

"I could sooner part with life than with my love for Augustus!" cried Julia, passionately.

Lady Delmaine, wholly unconscious of the rapturous effusions into which the Platonics of the two young votaries led them, was something startled at this declaration; but prudently resolved to spare her admonitions for calmer moments, and only observed, "I will leave

you to quiet now, my love, and as far as it depends on my entire forgiveness, be assured you have it ;” and, so saying, she withdrew to ponder upon the best means of restoring Julia’s peace of mind.

In reflecting on what she had said, the allusion to “dread of Lady Barbara,” recurred to her, and suggested the idea that Adelaide’s *agaceries* could only have been a friendly device, however injudicious, to *screen* Julia from her aunt’s observation ; and thus did Julia unwittingly bring about the very effect her friend had wanted her to contrive. Lady Delmaine lost no time in imparting to her husband what had passed with her daughter, concluding the little narrative with the supposition that had now occurred to her ; and Sir Arthur readily received it as the elucidation of his ward’s ~~before~~ inexplicable conduct.

## CHAP. VI.

HITHERTO Sir Arthur had scarcely considered Adelaide in a more particular light than he might any other orphan thrown wholly on his protection; but the enigma of her conduct first puzzled and angered, then interested him to seek its solution; and now that his wife had offered it, by saying, "she took it for granted that it was anxiety to save Julia from her aunt's sarcasms that led her to behave so unaccountably to Augustus in her presence;" his approbation of the feeling, combined with a strong sense of the unmerited displeasure he had shown in their conference, gave her a hold upon his thoughts she had never yet had, and induced him to as-



sume an air of so much affectionate kindness when next they met, as proved altogether overpowering to his unconscious ward.

“Come and take the seat of Augustus, next to me, my dear,” he said; kindly taking her by the hand, as they went down to dinner.

Adelaide, who had been arming herself with fortitude to meet the stern brow with which he had dismissed her, was so wholly overset by this unexpected kindness, that she burst into tears.

Conceiving them to flow for the displeasure he had shown, he continued, “I have been unjust in my reprehensions, and you are entitled to the *amende honorable* of being acquitted before this little friendly court of all imputed inconsistency of conduct; it has, on the contrary, my warmest approbation.”

Adelaide was thunderstruck; she knew not what could have produced the change; but her tears increased. Julia

and Charlotte were surprised. Lady Delmaine alone understood his meaning, and looked gratified. Lady Barbara was fortunately absent.

Sir Arthur's attentions to his ward were unremitting during dinner-time. She could not swallow a morsel, her new-born happiness choaked her. Dangerous indeed were these gentle tones—this affectionate solicitude—to the enthusiastic Platonist.

She took refuge in her own apartment the moment they arose from table, to indulge in the ecstatic sense of the interest she had excited in the breast of her guardian. But how? This was a mystery she could not unravel.

She was not left long to her cogitations; her old servant, Pierre, knocked at her door. He was bid to come in. Pierre was like all old confidential French servants, very familiar and very *bavard* withal.

He began by begging *mille pardons*,

but he could not help coming to say how he had been *au désespoir* in the morning, to hear his dear young lady blamed for causing such unhappiness to Monsieur Auguste that every body loved ; and now to find that it was all a *ruse pour l'amour de Mlle. Julie* ; there was something *si beau dans le dévouement de l'amitié*, that Pierre could not sufficiently express his admiration, particularly as he could never have expected it now she was so unfortunately become a heretic.

Adelaide's amazement kept her silent. At length, "*Mais où avez vous donc pris tout ce que vous me dites là ?*"

He begged *mille pardons* again, but he could not betray his friend ; he should never be told any thing *en confidence* in future.

" Assuredly, it is rather an odd use of the confidence, to come straight to me with it. I hope you are more discreet with the rest of the family."

“ Mademoiselle might *compter la-dessus*, for there was none of the family understood a word of French ; and *d’ailleurs*, it was not *pour se vanter* ; but he must take the liberty of saying, that he reckoned himself *la discrétion personifiée*.”

Adelaide could not forbear a smile, as she said, “ I must suppose you have been studying English then ?”

“ *Dieu me préserve de cette langue hérétique !*” he earnestly ejaculated. “ *Mademoiselle oublie donc,*” added the simple soul, “ that the *valet-de-chambre de Monsieur le Chevalier*, is a Swiss.”

Unwilling to distress him, by observing upon what he was betraying, she dismissed him, with repeated injunctions, to refrain from talking of her in any way whatever. She was satisfied she had now obtained a sort of clue to the change in her guardian’s behaviour : but still, how had it arisen ? Julia must have repented of her unfriendly refusal,

and in some way or other suggested the idea. "Dearest girl! how can I ever thank her enough!" was her mental exclamation, as she instantly flew to seek her.

Embracing her in all the eagerness of friendly gratitude, "O, Julia! dear Julia!" she cried, "you have devised what has not only saved me, but imparted happiness beyond my hope!"

"Dear Adelaide! I wish whatever has happened to alleviate your distress were owing to me, but indeed I have devised nothing: on the contrary, I was only waiting an opportunity of acknowledging to you the great danger I had been in of betraying you to my mother: — I never was so frightened in my life! but luckily, I believe she did not attend to my words, for she made no observation on my stopping short of what I had begun to say."

She then imparted what had passed with her mother, and the mystery re-

remained unsolved to both. They could neither conjecture the mistake to which Julia had undesignedly given rise; nor could they divine, that what Louis had been able to relate to Pierre, originated in the circumstance of his having been, unknown to Sir Arthur, employed in the dressing closet adjoining to the study, with the door open between them, when Lady Delmaine went to inform him of her conversation with Julia.

From that day a material change took place in Sir Arthur Delmaine's manner to his ward; he treated her with an affectionate attention, but too fatally calculated to work upon her ardent unregulated mind, which soon, indeed, was raised to a pitch of enthusiasm that left her no power to control her looks and expressions.

Charlotte's dislike to her increased with the numberless circumstances that daily occurred to feed it. She had naturally a tendency to jealousy, which

combined with a slight propensity to adopt Lady Barbara's views of human nature, led her, in the first instance, to feel strongly the being supplanted, as she termed it, in her sister's affection, and moreover, to attribute this to the arts of Adelaide, whereas it was Charlotte herself who was unconsciously withdrawing from the confidence with which they both wished to treat her. In addition to this cause of grievance, came the misdemeanour respecting Augustus, as well in attracting, as since making him wretched by her rejection; and, finally, her present obvious attempt to engross Sir Arthur's attention and conversation wholly to herself; for all and every one of which causes, Charlotte cherished a competent dose of hatred, which she manifested by keeping aloof from the young friends, to the sincere grief of Julia, who remonstrated and argued in vain with her sister: a very decided coolness between

them was the consequence, on the part, at least, of Charlotte.

Fruitless also had Lady Delmaine's repeated endeavours proved, to labour the point with her daughter, of applying the power of her mind to conquer her unreturned prepossession for Augustus ; the counteracting enfeebling influence of Adelaide's Platonic creed had taken too strong a hold to be so easily eradicated ; and her whole soul was given up to hopeless love. In the course of a very few weeks, her pale cheek and nervous symptoms gave sufficient alarm to her parents, to determine their procuring her the benefit of sea air and bathing, as soon as the invigorating temperature of autumn should make the removal eligible. Scarborough was fixed upon, on account of a promised visit at some indeterminate time in their way thither.

They were to travel with their own horses : — the landaulet, Sir Arthur's curricle, and a led saddle-horse for the



young ladies to ride in turn, were the proposed conveyance. Adelaide was naturally a very timid horse-woman ; she was also liable to turn sick in a close carriage, and Lady Delmaine's health being delicate, she could seldom think the day fit for having the landaulet open ; it was either too hot, or too cold, or too damp, or too windy ; the best accommodation for Adelaide, therefore, was to be driven by Sir Arthur in the curricule. Charlotte was provoked beyond endurance, at what she chose to consider as affected, for obtaining this very end ; but she had sufficient prudence, however, to be unwilling to open the eyes of her mother.

“ Come ! my little enthusiast,” was the affectionate invitation with which Sir Arthur usually held out his hand to assist his young companion into his vehicle, and the transport of alacrity with which she sprang into it may be conceived.

The conversation of Sir Arthur was

interesting and instructive in no common degree ; — a great and discerning admirer of the beauties of nature, he had studied her in every branch : he had now to communicate his observations, his knowledge, to a mind in every way qualified to profit by them. This intellectual intercourse was delightful to him, and Adelaide said to herself,

“ And truths divine come mended from his tongue ; ”

but unfortunately, “ truths divine ” were not in the habitual possession of Sir Arthur's mind. He was, in the acceptation of the world and his own, a strictly moral man ; for he conscientiously performed his duties. He was of calm passions ; — the tide of life had thus far run smoothly with him, and his virtue had never yet had any severe trial to sustain. — Alas for virtue, that his besetting sin should have been that which lost our common mother ! and which she has by no means entailed on her *femalé* posterity alone.

*It is the weak side of human nature. — Vanity ! — Vanity ! — then only subdued when religious principles supply the corrective of humility ; and in these principles, both guardian and ward were unhappily deficient.*

He could not be wholly blind to what appeared so obviously to others, — Adelaide's devotedness to him. But his vanity was flattered by the undisguised admiration of so lovely, pure, and highly gifted a being, to a degree that robbed him of the power of impartially investigating consequences, or indeed of once letting his thoughts turn to them. He held himself incapable of seeking to take any other advantage of her predilection, than using his influence to strengthen her in the love of virtue ; and saw, in her spotless mind, the certainty that no idea would ever harbour there that could merit reprobation. Thus weakly did he suffer himself to encourage what, at the very best, could only lead to her mental

misery, if no other ills followed ; but far others were inevitably in its train ! — and who would have had a quicker perception of them, had any but himself been concerned ? In justice to him, however, let it be said, that at this time her adoration did not strike him in its strongest light : — he considered her still as a child, — she was an enthusiast by nature. — He had no doubt, that with powers of mind so superior, reason would in a little time more acquire its due ascendancy, and enable her to listen to, and appreciate his arguments, whenever any eligible offer for her establishment should occur : — in the meanwhile, the gratification she afforded him he deemed innocent, and felt irresistible. But what a sophist is human reason, when trusting to herself ! Was not Sir Arthur a striking instance of this ? Had he for one minute reverted to the self-subduing precepts inculcated ..... Hold there my pen ! — having ever objected to sermonising in these light

productions, otherwise than by example, we must not now offend against our own rule. Suffice it to show what mischiefs must follow his, as well as his ward's self-delusion ; — for the counteracting principle, we must refer our readers to a very different description of study.

The visit to the Weybridge family was of some days. The ebullitions of displeasure were uncontrollable in Charlotte's disturbed mind : — resolved against alarming her mother, and keeping aloof from her sister, she could not resist giving vent to her feelings to Cecilia Weybridge, who was about her own age, and had attached herself more particularly to her : — in strict confidence, however, which was not betrayed during the continuance of the visit, — except by a marked distance of behaviour on the part of the young lady to Adelaide, rather surprising to the rest of the family, who were fascinated by her elegance and attractions ; but for which holding-back,

Cecilia sufficiently accounted when the guests were gone, by imparting Charlotte's opinion.

This family had engaged to join the Delmaines at Scarborough, and spend some time there with them; which they accordingly did—but with a prejudice against Adelaide now so confirmed by her open demonstrations of attachment to her guardian, that their behaviour to her was little short of absolute rudeness. Such a result went greatly beyond what Charlotte had foreseen;—she had only spoken from inability to hold her tongue, and relied upon more discretion in her new friend than she was mistress of herself. She heartily repented of her imprudence, when she perceived the awkwardnesses arising from it in their daily society. She reprobated Cecilia's want of caution equally with her own; but what did it now avail?—the evil was irremediable. Julia, grieved and hurt at any slight passed upon her friend, still more

than if it had been offered to herself, kept at a distance from the Miss Weybridges, and devoted her whole attention to obviating, in every possible way, Adelaide's perception of their pointed coldness to her ; a shyness and separation among the young people was the natural consequence. Lady Delmaine, abstracted and unobservant as she was apt to be, was not entirely blind to behaviour so offensive as that of the whole Weybridge family to her young *protégée* ; but she was inclined to "take it for granted," that it must originate in the prejudice against foreigners, so common in those who have not mixed much in London society ; for the Weybridges only spent an occasional six weeks there, once in two or three years ;—so she did not trouble herself with any farther investigation of what she saw no chance of remedying, however vexatious she felt it.

Sir Arthur was indignant at seeing his ward made the object of undeserved dis-

respect ; but, conceiving he should be letting her down by taking notice of it, anxious at the same time to remove the unfounded impression which he perceived had been made, and conscious of his own high character in the world, — he thought he could not more effectually vindicate her from any unjust imputation than by treating her himself with the most marked distinction and respect. And, unluckily, this was the only part of all that was occurring which produced a sensible effect upon Adelaide : — her heart and soul absorbed by her sentiments for him, every thing in which he was not immediately concerned glanced off unheeded, and his increased attentions completed the intoxication of her mind. The Weybridges were good people, but not of very polished manners, and she simply attributed any failure towards herself to a want of *savoir vivre*, so that it made no difference in her obligingness to them, or readiness



to contribute the charm of her talents in any way they might be called forth.

This state of things necessarily threw a damp on social enjoyment, and Julia's health did not seem to be improving by the bracing air from which they had hoped so much. Sir Arthur proposed, therefore, abridging their intended stay at the sea-side, and giving the remainder of their time to a visit to the lakes, to try the effect on their patient, of regular gentle exercise and constant change of air.

This new plan was promptly assented to, and every individual of the two parties experienced as much readiness to separate as they had done to meet.

## CHAP. VII.

THE remainder of the autumn proved uncommonly favourable to their lengthened excursion; and Adelaide would not have exchanged her happiness for that of the angels in heaven.

Soon after their return home, they were joined by Lady Barbara and the General, as well as by some other guests who were in the habit of visiting Hawkwood Manor at this season. Lady Barbara saw but too much cause to confirm her former conjectures, and was not sparing of her observations; but Lady Delmaine, whose own devotion to her husband impressed her with the idea, that no veneration could exceed his deserts, and who was, besides, fully satisfied of the innocence of Adelaide's heart, still perceived no-

thing but an excess of youthful enthusiasm in her conduct—and on Sir Arthur's integrity, and the constancy of his affection, it was not in her aunt's power to shake her reliance.

The general, however, was too clear-sighted not to take some alarm ; and he determined to seek an early opportunity of opening the eyes, not of Lady Delmaine, but of Adelaide herself, whose unconsciousness of her own danger, as well as of the animadversions to which she was every hour giving rise, deeply interested him.

Before he could put this friendly intention into execution, an incident occurred, of a sort so betraying, as to leave no doubt of the *excess* of her attachment, at least,—whatever might still remain with some of the purity of its nature.

The dinner table was lighted by a globe lamp on a very high column—the butler, who was accustomed to raise it for the purpose of letting the lay-over be

drawn away from under it, was ill—and Pierre, eager to supply his place in performing this office, and not aware that the lamp was top heavy, let it tilt over in a direction that must have struck the temple of Sir Arthur, (who was at that instant bending, in some measure, across Adelaide, in conversation with her right-hand neighbour,) but that *her* eye happening to be turned upon Pierre's movements, she perceived what was coming, and with a wild scream darted her head forward to intercept the blow; it struck upon her gold tiara, which shivered the glass to pieces, and a splinter flew into her eye.

The pain was so acute that she fainted away, whilst Lady Barbara triumphantly vociferated, “*Brava!* — worthy of the self-devoting days of ancient Greece and Rome, upon my honour! though not, perchance, from inspiration quite as laudable.”

The general confusion prevented this

taunting speech from producing all the effect intended. Lady Delmaine sat motionless with terror. —

And what was the effect produced upon her husband?

Is there a man who could have escaped feeling the stroke rebound upon his heart? — If there be, that man was not Sir Arthur Delmaine, for he felt it in his very heart's core.

“Great God of heaven !” he distractedly cried, “she’s killed !” — and, prompted by the impulse of the moment, he, with a countenance of such wild emotion as it had never yet portrayed, snatched her up in his arms, and took her to a sofa in the drawing-room, followed by Julia, more dead than alive, and Pierre, frantically screaming, “*Au secours ! — au secours !*” till he collected all the females in the house about her, and then ran off like a madman for the surgeon in the village, clearing every hedge and ditch

in his way, with an activity which the influence of fright alone could have lent to his old limbs; rushing into the shop, he roared out, "*Mademoiselle d'Hauteroche est tuée de ma main!*" and fell down perfectly exhausted, incapable of further utterance or motion. The surgeon just understood enough of French to discover that some dreadful accident had happened; and although not habitually employed by the family, he obeyed the summons with all speed, leaving poor Pierre to his fate.

The nature of the accident had not been obvious to those who remained in the parlour, the swoon had followed so instantaneously upon the blow.

"Performed to admiration!" cried the unrelenting harpy—"and with every result she could have desired."

This was the first moment the slightest tendency to a doubt had found its way into Lady Delmaine's tranquil breast—not in the sense of her aunt's suggestion, but from

the effect produced upon Sir Arthur, whom she had thus far beheld in every emergency so collected. She changed colour: — Charlotte, not having remarked it, was rising to accompany her sister, when she was stopped by Lady Barbara's saying, " Bless my soul, child ! surely *you* won't join in deserting your poor mother — don't you see how she is struck with this ' much ado about nothing ? ' "

" Your Ladyship seems bent upon working it into something, however ! " the general indignantly observed, desirous to ward off the mischief evidently beginning to take effect in Lady Delmaine's mind. " You cannot, surely, mean to imply a doubt of the poor girl's being materially hurt ; and could Delmaine preserve his calmness on such an occasion, he must be composed of very different ' stuff ' from what I have ever known him. "

" He is composed of very sufficiently malleable matter for this young sorceress

to work upon, take my word for it!" was the reply.

All this passed so much more rapidly than can appear on paper, that it made but a trifling delay in their following into the drawing-room — Lady Delmaine was so lost in thought, that it was almost forcibly the general drew her arm through his to lead her to the scene of distress. They found Sir Arthur hanging in silent agony over the sofa, where lay the still insensible Adelaide — Julia wringing her hands on the other side, and the housekeeper administering the usual means of restoration.

"Has the surgeon been sent for?" the general asked. He was answered in the affirmative by one of the female servants, the whole family being now collected in the room. A servant on horseback had been dispatched to the town of — by the housekeeper, directly on Pierre's giving the alarm, she added.

"She begins to revive," said the house-



keeper. "God be praised!—God be praised!" fervently ejaculated Sir Arthur, who from the suddenness of the swoon had at first apprehended the blow to have been on the temple, and decisive.

"It will be well if there be cause to praise God for it in the end!" said the merciless sibyl, who had at first kept back, but on second thoughts been instigated by curiosity to follow the rest. Her cruel speech remained unanswered, though not unheeded by the surrounding attendants.

As the poor sufferer began to recover consciousness, her endeavour to open the eye occasioned a shifting of the splinter, the torture of which produced a second swoon, after faintly murmuring out, "Oh! the intolerable anguish!"

Lady Delmaine now clearly saw the accident ~~was~~ sufficiently serious to justify the alarm of her husband, and invalidate her aunt's bitter insinuations. Reproaching herself for having been one

instant affected by them, she anxiously sought to atone for it by the increased zeal with which she came forward to direct every precautionary measure the circumstance required. She gave orders for the dispatch of a second messenger, whose horse might be of use to quicken the arrival of the surgeon, in case his own should not have been in immediate readiness; and suggested that Adelaide should be removed within reach of bed, that she might be got into it the moment it was practicable. Sir Arthur insisted upon removing her himself; and taking her up a second time, carried her to her own apartment, attended only by Lady Delmaine, Julia, and the housekeeper. By the time they reached it, the village surgeon arrived. The urgency of the case, added to the fear that the town practitioner, being in greater request, might not be so immediately found, induced them to trust the patient to hands of whose skill none of the family had any

experience. No external hurt or contusion being discoverable, the injury remained unascertained till Adelaide again recovered sufficiently to point out the seat of the pain. The moment this knowledge was obtained, the operator, nothing doubtful of his own capacity, asserted there was no time to be lost, and proceeded without delay to the extraction of the splinter ; but this would have required a far more able hand, as well to avert subsequent injury as to mitigate the present torture inflicted by his bungling attempts. Adelaide bore the operation with the most heroic fortitude ; whilst Sir Arthur, though he resolutely maintained his post of assistant to the surgeon, scarce had power to support himself, — trembling to a degree that almost incapacitated him from holding the different instruments the man had put into his hands, to select from as he wanted them.

The removal of the splinter being

finally accomplished, goulard poultices and bandages applied, the poor sufferer was left to quiet, and the care of Julia and her own maid. Sir Arthur now went staggering towards his study, in such visible distress, as to lead his anxious wife to follow him.

Unconscious of her doing so, he flung himself upon his sofa, distractedly ejaculating, “ Oh God ! Oh God ! — heroic girl ! angelic victim ! ” —

“ My dearest husband ! ” interrupted Lady Delmaine, generously unwilling to owe any information to surprise, though considerably struck with the strength of his expressions, “ this has been altogether too severe a trial ! — I wish you would let Stanton prescribe some quieting draught for you, ere he leaves the house.” —

“ I shall soon recover composure,” he replied, “ now that the worst is over ; it was too dreadful to see her suffer such martyrdom for her affectionate zeal to

ward off the stroke from me ! By heaven ! I could cry like an infant !” — and he actually burst into tears.

Lady Delmaine was disconcerted ; for the having voluntarily encountered the blow had escaped her observation, — so seldom alive to passing events, it had not even been awakened by Lady Barbara’s sneers. She recovered sufficiently, however, to reply, “ I had perhaps better leave you to quiet after such severe exertion.”

“ Thank you, my dear, I believe it will be the most effectual remedy : I will attend the tea table by-and-by.” —

And Lady Delmaine retired with a mind less at ease than she was willing to see cause for ; determined, at all events, to abstain from increasing whatever evil might now be in store for her, by ill humour or reproaches. Neither was she willing to risk having her present misgivings converted into a more distressing certainty by her aunt’s spiteful remarks ;

she therefore judiciously repaired to her own apartment, to strengthen her mind by serious reflection, before returning to the trio that had continued to occupy the drawing-room; of whose conversation we shall presently take note, after observing upon the state of mind in which Lady Delmaine had left Sir Arthur.

The tumult in his breast was not of a nature to be very speedily quelled. All that could awaken the sensibilities of man had occurred to work upon his feelings. The devoted affection which had prompted the lovely girl to intercept the injury to him at the hazard of her life — for, as he had in the first instance conceived the stroke to have been fatal, he had not a doubt but she had tempted her danger with the full knowledge that it might prove so, — the sufferings that had ensued, — the strength of mind displayed in her endurance of them, were so many claims upon his tenderest ad-

miration. Against this admiration, however, he was but too conscious of the necessity to steel himself. — But how? — there was the difficulty.

A speedy separation from so dangerous an object was the first idea that must naturally arise in the mind of a man of honour and integrity, such as he had ever esteemed himself; but in the particular circumstances attending this case, there were other considerations to be taken into the account. Where could she go? — urged his old, habitual, fallacious counsellor, Reason, by whom the general tenor of his actions had hitherto however been safely enough guided. “As guardian, am I not enjoined to keep her under my own eye for the next two to three years? What would the world think of might now, deserting my trust? And can there be any doubt or reluctance to apprehend, that a man, willing to risk his own moral givings convert, without vanity boast his moral certainty by her, having stood the test of all, only misleads youth, should

be in danger, in his maturer years, of being drawn aside by passion? Surely, if there is any one point in which I may answer for myself above all others, it is the absolute impossibility that I should harbour a thought injurious to a young creature thrown wholly on my protection! And who shall open to her the knowledge of her own breast, if I do not endeavour to direct her attention to the too great ascendancy her natural enthusiasm is giving to her feelings? Indelicate, indeed, would it be in me to assign this task to any other! *I will be her true guardian, even against myself!*" was his final magnanimous and proud resolve; and very nobly it sounded, and not a little did he rise in his own estimation in consequence of it.

For the present his ward was clearly not in a state to bear any such discussion; the fever was running high from the additional inflammation brought on by the unskilful proceedings to which



she had been exposed ; and common humanity, as well as gratitude, demanded the most unremitting attentions on his part. Of these he certainly was not sparing.

Does this self-delusion seem altogether too young for a man of Sir Arthur Delmaine's years ? Let any one, who may have been exposed to the same ordeal, answer the question ; and if he be candid, and equally devoid of a steadier guiding principle, he will confess, that there is exactly an age in man as well as woman, when having passed by the hey-day of the passions with impunity, and believing themselves safe from farther peril — if they should then be assailed by the avowed and unlooked-for predilection of an attractive object, they are but in the greater danger for their imagined security, and vanity takes all the more active part, for being again called into play after giving up the game. In females, at least, it is an incontestable truth,

that a conquest achieved in their wane has led those astray who had escaped with credit from the trials of their youthful days. And, in fact, however high the lords of the creation may hold themselves, human nature works so nearly alike in both the sexes, that it is perfectly fair to conclude man as fallible in such respects as weaker woman.

In this "*ower* true tale," (as the Scotch say,) it will at least be found so.

## CHAP. VIII.

THE party remaining in the drawing-room when Adelaide was removed from it, were now at full liberty to communicate their animadversions upon what had occurred.

“Happy were it,” Lady Barbara began, “those basilisk eyes never opened more!”

“O, dearest aunt! how very severe!” cried Charlotte — “when she is paying so dreadfully dear for trying to save papa. I never liked her half so well before.”

“You never before had such powerful cause to hate her. See the result — and remember my words!” rejoined Lady Barbara.

“May I ask for whose benefit these

cruelly strong remarks are uttered?" said the General.

"To benefit the cause of virtue and morality," was the reply; and the misjudging old woman actually believed herself doing what she said.

"Alas, for the cause that is so advocated!" the General returned, with warmth.

"What may you mean, General? would you sanction depravity by letting it pass unreprieved?"

"Depravity is a very harsh word, my good lady, which appears to me wholly misapplied here; but allow me to observe, that were it even applicable, it is not by sarcastic *innuendo* that it will be corrected."

"I am quite prepared," she indignantly retorted, "for the leniency with which men will excuse each other in aberrations of this kind, upon the old principle of 'ask my brother if I'm a

rogue?"—but you will please to recollect that Lady Delmaine is my niece."

"And therefore entitled to your deepest interest, I will admit."

"And would you have me suffer her to go on, fostering a viper in her bosom?"

"I would have you take some gentler mode of averting the evil, than applying caustics to a green wound."

"Aha! you are compelled to acknowledge the *wound*, however."

"Your ladyship's sharp probe gave me the first indication of it to-day."

"I rejoice to hear of its effect."

"Good God! Lady Barbara! can you wish to excite alarm and foment discord?"

"Would you have me sit tamely by, and see her wronged?"

"I certainly would not point out the wrong unless I could at the same time suggest the remedy; if in fact there were

any real cause for accusation, which I am firmly convinced there is not."

"If you did not see your way better in the fields of Mars than in those of Cupid, General, your name would not have stood as high as it does."

"It is an ungracious return to such a complimentary speech, to observe, as I am compelled to do, that you seem to have enlisted under banners more inimical to peace than even the deities to which you allude, in proceeding upon your present plan—in the name of common sense, what good result can you expect from aggravating the grounds of suspicion, instead of seeking to conciliate?"

"I am an inveterate foe to duplicity of every kind, and consider it as a proof of lukewarmness in the cause of good morals, to let it pass unexposed."

"Even though the destruction of your niece's peace were to be the consequence?"

“ I should despise the woman who could tamely submit to such wrongs.”

“ And is violence a judicious remedy ?”

“ I should disown my niece, if she sat with her arms across under similar provocation !”

“ Give me leave, Lady Barbara, to ask you one question — Is Lady Delmaine’s happiness near your heart ?”

“ Good heaven ! a strange one, surely ! — Can you doubt it ?”

“ Your present proceeding might justify its being deemed somewhat problematical.”

This put her into an absolute rage, which he quietly suffered her to vent in a torrent of abuse against the whole male sex, as abettors of each other’s immoralities ; and when she had fairly run herself out of breath, he coolly replied —

“ I shall surprise you, perhaps, by retorting the accusation, and asserting that half the immoralities of our sex may

be attributed to the indulgence with which they are overlooked by yours."

"*Io triumphe!* a flat contradiction to all you have been contending for! I am quite satisfied!"

"Hold, hold, my good lady! not so fast! — I make a distinction that exactly meets the point at issue between us; it is *other men's wives* who countenance a husband's immoralities, by overlooking them; but *his own* foregoes her best chance of reclaiming him, if she be not resolutely deaf and blind."

"To the immortal honour of your sex be it spoken, that it is only by renouncing two of the most attractive female attributes, candour and simplicity, and becoming a finished hypocrite, in other words, degrading herself to his own level, — for I can scarce rate a female hypocrite higher than a male profligate — that a wife has any chance of recovering her lost treasure. Upon my word, I must say,



in the phrase of your unworthy favorite's language, *Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle.*"

The honest General's perceptions were clearer than his argumentative powers, and being something disconcerted withal by her ladyship's sarcasms, he contented himself with the endeavour to end the discussion, by observing, "However all that may be, we have strayed widely from the object we began with, in which assuredly neither profligacy nor hypocrisy bore any share; for I aver Delmaine to be as moral and honourable a man as breathes, and Mademoiselle d'Hauteroche purity personified!"

"This is begging the question with a witness—" Lady Barbara was beginning, with a most contemptuous sneer, when she was interrupted by the re-entrance of Julia, and the argument terminated by the General's anxious enquiry after the poor sufferer; to which as soon as he had heard the answer, he disappeared, leaving his antagonist to the exultation of

having, as she boasted to Charlotte, “fairly beaten him out of the field.” Her ladyship then observing with some asperity on her niece’s inattention to herself, in having withdrawn into her dressing-room without proper apology, retreated to her own apartment, to the great relief of the girls, too much accustomed to the manifestations of their aunt’s temper, to regard with much disquietude the state of apparent displeasure in which she now conveyed herself away.\*

Several days of unremitting assiduity on the part of Sir Arthur had passed without affording him the opportunity he anxiously waited for, of expressing to Adelaide the agitating sensations that filled his bosom. They could not be spoken in presence of any third person; they might be misinterpreted, innocent and natural as he felt them to be: Adelaide alone could fully understand their purity, and for her ear must they be reserved. Twenty times a day he

knocked at her chamber door to make *his personal enquiry*, in the eager hope that a fortunate moment would at length occur, when neither Julia, Lady Delmaine, the nurse, nor her own maid, would be there to open it to him ; and their absence might leave him the power of just stealing in for one instant, to unburthen his oppressed heart of its insupportable load.

And occur it finally did :—to his gentle tap no return but the feeble “ come in ” of the invalid was made. With cautious step, and palpitating heart, he stole to the foot of the bed —

“ Dearest Adelaide ! beloved sufferer ! how can I express the grief or the gratitude that fills my whole soul ? ”

“ Oh that frigid word *gratitude* ! ” she interrupted, “ how it chills every finer feeling !—it was the truest, purest affection prompted what affection alone can repay ! ”

“ And the tenderest, purest, most affectionate friendship will henceforth be the

guiding principle of my every thought," he replied; — "but ah! how inadequate the most fervent feelings of my soul to compensate the dreadful injury you have sustained!" He spoke in that pathetic tone of impassioned feeling, which penetrates into the heart with power so irresistible. "Name it not!" exclaimed Adelaide, with enthusiastic energy; "at the price of both my eyes I would purchase felicity such as now you promise me. What is there in the wide range of mental enjoyment to compare with the rapture of virtuous friendship!"

Here this brief but too impressive dialogue was put an end to by the return of the nurse, who immediately and warmly expostulated against the impropriety of making the patient talk; "For see how flushed she be! — and her pulse! — merciful goodness, how they ~~does~~ gallop!"

Sir Arthur submitted to nurse's authority, and withdrew; whilst Adelaide again laid her head on her pillow with

silent rapture, in the exquisite consciousness of having attained the summit of her wishes — “the tenderest, purest, most affectionate friendship” of her guardian! What could this earth bestow beyond it?

Nurse did not leave her to the quiet indulgence of this precious repose; — her wrath had not subsided with the disappearance of its object; — she went on muttering and grumbling to herself at the difficulties she had to encounter, in keeping the room as quiet as the doctor required, and at length burst forth again more audibly, on perceiving a slight motion of the window curtain, with — “Why, now, its my belief that foolish old Frenchman has sneaked in again, blubbering and bemoaning himself in his outlandish gibberish, as if that could do fey good. Aye, sure enough, and so it pron. Get out with you, Mounseer! — its

“Ame to come sniggering in that fectiona into a lady’s bedchamber, with-

out so much as saying, with your leave, or by your leave."

Adelaide here interposed, "*Que faites vous donc là, mon pauvre Pierre ?*"

"*Ah, Mademoiselle ! oh, mon Dieu ! — pardon ! pardon ! de l'affreux malheur ; — jamais je ne m'en consolerais ! non jamais ! au grand jamais !*" —

Adelaide exerted herself to comfort and reassure him. In vain ! his lamentations having now found vent for the first time, became so clamorous, that the provoked nurse set about turning him out by strength of arm, which, however, he resisted with all his might, till he obtained, in proof of forgiveness, the promise that he should be admitted twice a day, to satisfy himself, *par ses propres yeux*, of the progress of his lady's recovery. Eagerly and anxiously he availed himself of this permission, and her progress soon satisfied him that he might somewhat abridge the duration of his inconsolableness, particularly

as he in a great measure ascribed it to his own daily expiatory offerings to his patron saint, whom he had at first feared to find inflexible, on account of Adelaide's deviation from the right road. Her affection for the faithful creature caused her to indulge him in lengthened conversations, which speedily emboldened him to solicit *une grace*, that none but herself, he thought, could obtain for him ; and that was to intercede with Sir Arthur to forgive his *inconceivable maladresse*.

She had no doubt of obtaining it, the moment she spoke upon the subject.

Pierre doubted it very much.

“ Why so ? ”

Because Monsieur le Chevalier's resentment was so great he would not bear him to come into his sight, and indeed had ordered him to keep out of it, with *menaces et une fureur* such as he had never seen him in before ; which he could not even have believed to be in

his nature; and it was renewed upon every occasion of their meeting.

“And why did you not keep out of the way of provoking him?”

“*Pardi, le moyen, Mademoiselle?* I could never feel a moment's peace away from your door; and fifty times a day Mr. le Chevalier was at it.”

The ecstasy conveyed to the bosom of Adelaide by this communication, would have been quite sufficient to ensure her zealous mediation, had she not been as much attached to the old man as she really was. With no lukewarm pleading, therefore, did she open the cause she had undertaken the very first moment that the state of her convalescence, by allowing her to occupy her *chaise-longue*, gave Sir Arthur the liberty of joining the party usually in attendance upon her; and with as little reluctance was her suit granted. Indeed, such was her present ascendancy over him, that she could not easily have devised a request he would



not have been equally ready to meet. No impediment to her perfect recovery being foreseen, his anger at Pierre was not only subdued, but the poor fellow rose in favour to a degree for which he could never have hoped, ignorant as he was of the impulse which was now swaying Sir Arthur's mind with an omnipotence he scarcely himself suspected.

His unremitting assiduity, in accompanying her other kind nurses to her dressing-room, as well as the minuteness of his attentions when there was more felt by his ward than perceived by those surrounding her, justified as they were by their cause, which had even softened Charlotte to some little sympathy in the sufferings of the invalid : and the absence of Lady Barbara from her post of observation, (who had, to testify her resentment at the neglect with which she conceived herself treated whilst Adelaide was thus engrossing the general solici-

tude, taken this opportunity of visiting a neighbouring family,) left them a little longer to the happy blindness of their unsuspecting natures.

## CHAP. IX.

THE first serious misgivings of Lady Delmaine's mind occurred in consequence of the final removal of the bandages from the eye by the more able surgeon, who had succeeded to the first unfortunate operator almost immediately after the irreparable mischief had taken place. He had withheld his opinion as long as he could evade giving it, but was now compelled to proclaim the sight irrecoverably destroyed.

Sir Arthur, thrown completely off his guard by this declaration, became absolutely frantic, and expressed his feelings in terms of such unqualified strength, as could not but startle Lady Delmaine, and carry back her thoughts to her aunt's anticipations. Candour was, however,

a marked feature in her character; and though cruelly staggered, she was sufficiently aroused to action, on this occasion, not to take any thing for granted. She determined to seek an immediate explanation with Adelaide, who, on her part, had heard the fatal sentence with the most magnanimous unconcern. Her guardian had, on more than one occasion, professed his disregard of personal charms, and her own had become valueless in her estimation; she felt she should now have a hold upon his tenderest sympathy, and was happy.

The blemish was not, however, so obvious to common observation as might be imagined: the apparent brilliancy of the eye was not dimmed; the pupil followed the direction of its companion, although no longer partaking in its information; and there was a peculiarly attractive downcast grace of demeanor, natural to Adelaide, which made the slight depression of the eyelid pass for the

habitual trick of near-sighted people who, in some degree, close the eye to exclude light, and see more distinctly.

Lady Delmaine had been greatly struck with such a remarkable indifference, in so young a person, on so trying an occasion ; and she began with expressing her “ surprise, that what gave them all so much pain should be borne with such exemplary calmness.”

“ There is not much of philosophy required, to bear so trifling an evil !” was the answer.

“ Few young women, at your time of life, could with sincerity say they deemed the evil trifling,” Lady Delmaine observed.

“ I speak it in the very spirit of truth, I can assure you,” replied Adelaide.

“ What can have produced an apathy so very uncommon ?”

“ The devoting of my life to the cultivation of pure friendship.”

“ But friendship is not of so monopo-

lizing a nature, as to exclude the more tender sentiment in which beauty usually claims some share."

"The friendship I mean *includes* the more tender sentiment of which you speak, but of a sort so pure and refined, as to be independent, quite, of personal attraction."

"Beware, Adelaide! how you give way to visions that have ended fatally for many a poor female."

"That can only be from a mistaken choice."

"And do you trust to the experience of eighteen, for guarding you against such danger?"

"My choice could defy the power of malice to entertain a doubt of it; he is the perfection of purity and goodness."

"Have you any reluctance to impart his name?"

"Not the least, to *you*, Lady Delmaine, who are so intimately acquainted with his virtues — it is my guardian."

“ Adelaide ! do I hear aright ? ”

“ Why do you question it ? ”

“ A married man ! — the husband of your friend ! for such, I trust, I have proved myself.”

“ And can I give a stronger proof of the purity of my friendship for him, and the impossibility of its ever encroaching upon the sacred ties that bind him to you, than this voluntary avowal ? ”

“ And do you really allow yourself to believe you are not infringing on my rights, by the wish of alienating the mind of my husband ? ”

“ Surely, Lady Delmaine, friendship is not of that exclusive nature, like love, to be limited only to one ! ”

“ The friendship you profess for him is not the common friendship of the world, nor, indeed, what the world gives much credence to ; but I am not wishing to imply any doubts of your sincerity ; I will take your professions upon your own grounds. You said you included the

purest love in your friendship ; I am then to understand, that you would look for a similar return, and that you mean that intimate union of souls described by the votaries of the Platonic school ?”

“ I certainly do.”

“ And you imagine, that in a happy marriage, such as mine has proved for these twenty years past, the *union of souls* has not been its first and highest gratification ? O Adélaïde ! little do you know of true connubial felicity, if you do not believe that a delicate woman’s dearest rights are those which constitute her a husband’s first friend : slight to me, in comparison, would be a temporary lapse of personal fidelity.”

Adelaide, rather heart-struck with this statement, contended, however, that a participation in confidential friendship might take place without injury to the original compact.

“ You mean, then,” said Lady Delmaine, “ that devoting every sentiment



of your own heart to the cultivation of such an intercourse, you could be satisfied to hold only a secondary place in the affection of your friend ?”

“ I must confess I had not quite put the question to myself in that light.”

“ But you feel, that if you were a wife, you could suffer such a division of your husband’s affection without alarm ?”

“ That must depend, I own, upon the opinion I formed of the friend, as well as of the husband,” she replied, with some little hesitation.

“ Do not, Adelaide, believe in fanciful romantic dreams, set at nought by daily experience ; be assured there is no security against the dangers arising from such confidential intercourse,—and which are heightened to an inconceivable degree by the very confidence in their non-existence. Trust me, dear girl, I neither mean to impeach the innocence or purity of your intentions ; but your inexperience deceives you.”

“ But your husband’s experience, dear Lady Delmaine, is equal to your own, and if he admits the safety of the friendship to which I aspire, can you doubt —”

“ O Adelaide !” fervently interrupted Lady Delmaine, “ could you be aware how blissful the union you are in danger of destroying — could you know the long series of uninterrupted happiness I have enjoyed in that undeviating affection, made up of the finest and best feelings of our nature —

Wedded love !

That, pledged on earth, and sealed above,  
Grows in the world’s approving eyes,  
In friendship’s smile and home’s caress,  
Collecting all the heart’s sweet ties  
Into one knot of happiness !

— you would, indeed you would, shrink from the fear of injuring the high-wrought texture, by drawing away its slightest thread.” Tears streamed down her cheeks as she spoke.

Adelaide was much affected with this

appeal to her better feelings : never had she stated the case thus clearly to her own mind ; never had she considered herself as interfering with Lady Delmaine's happiness, by the innocent wish, as she deemed it, for Sir Arthur's tenderest friendship ; she truly loved his wife, and, softened by her tears, she, for the first time, experienced something of misgiving, and formed the honourable resolve of struggling against her passion,—for such, in fact, it had become, though unacknowledged as yet to herself. Throwing her arms about Lady Delmaine's neck, she exclaimed —

“ Not for the world would I draw away the slightest thread from such a blessed web ! but sooner relinquish my every hope of happiness to strengthen and secure it !—What then, dearest Lady Delmaine !—what can I do ?”

“ Noble minded girl ! I have not been mistaken in you !” — embracing her with warm affection.

“ But what must I do ? ” she replied, as her tears flowed fast on Lady Delmaine’s shoulder.

“ Distrust yourself ! ” — was the reply.

Had Lady Delmaine, in addition to this salutary precept, referred her to that sacred volume where the *humility* requisite for this purpose is practically enforced, and the *self-control* arising out of it so luminously displayed, poor Adelaide might still have escaped the misery she was preparing for herself, since at this moment all her best feelings were called into play by her friend’s affectionate appeal to them ; — for she had energy of character equal to any sacrifice a strong sense of duty had impressed upon her mind ; — but here, unfortunately, Lady Delmaine stopped short. The even tenor of her own days, like those of Sir Arthur, had hitherto been so unruffled by calamity, her religious duties and observances had been, according to the common run of worldly custom,

so confined to the Sabbath-day, that the practice of habitual every-day piety was neither resorted to nor estimated in the way that is alone conducive to the proper regulation of our conduct here, and our lasting happiness hereafter. Therefore, when Adelaide, in reply to her judicious admonition, asked, “ But to whom then shall I have recourse, if I must not trust myself?” she answered, “ Have recourse to me, whose heart will fondly cherish such confidence, and whose best advice shall ever be yours when applied for.”

Nothing could be kinder nor better intended. Weak advice, however, having to encounter strong passions, was but of untoward promise for a successful issue ; and Lady Delmaine had too great a preponderance of the *vis inertie* in her composition, to pursue her object with the necessary energy.

They separated, mutually pleased with each other, and with themselves. Lady Delmaine felt she had taken a decisive

step, from which happy results might fairly be expected; and Adelaide was conscious of having evinced a degree of heroic disinterested magnanimity which raised her greatly in her own opinion. She now, also, thought herself sure of combining her affection for the wife with the friendship of the husband; for, *as without the smallest intention of curbing her feelings*, she was so nobly foregoing the happiness nearest her heart, of standing *first* in her guardian's confidence, there could be no doubt of the generous return on Lady Delmaine's part of admitting her to be *second*: — the most rigid moralist would surely not deny her that!"

In all the elation of self-applause, she went in quest of Julia.

"O my friend!" she cried, throwing herself into her arms, "happy, indeed, shall I now be! — for I have explained every thing to your mother. I renounce for her sake the inconsiderate pretension

of holding the first place in your father's confidential friendship, that must of right be her's —"

Julia's satisfaction was too lively to be suppressed ; she eagerly interrupted her, with, " Dearest, dearest Adelaide ! I am so thankful she knows all : we shall now *be certain of not falling into error !*"

Adelaide, too strongly agitated for discussion, silently acquiesced, and with an affectionate embrace, left her in search of the quiet of her own apartment. While her friend, in the simple fervour of her disposition, overlooked in herself the testimony her pale thin cheek bore to the inefficacy of that advice on which she now placed her sanguine reliance.

Candour of acknowledgement is, no doubt, an important step towards propriety of action, but unless followed up by the correcting vigour which the highest principles can alone supply, it will soon leave the mind as open as ever to

the power of the passions : so Adelaide found.

Julia flew to her sister, in eager haste to reinstate Adelaide in the esteem to which she conceived her entitled from this proceeding ; but Charlotte took the matter in a different light.

“ And so you give her great credit for being satisfied with only cutting *us* out of our natural place in papa’s affection ?” she said.

The humble-minded girl, who had never thought of bringing herself into competition with her friend in any shape, looked surprised.

“ That partiality must be unbounded indeed,” continued Charlotte, “ which can so readily forego a daughter’s prior claim to her father’s confidence !”

“ I’m sure I never thought of myself in the whole affair,” replied Julia.

“ No, that is evident enough ; nor yet of those you were in the habit of considering in preference to yourself, before



*this all-absorbing friendship for Adelaide threw every one else into the background."*

"Indeed, Charlotte, you do not do me justice ; I have only associated Adelaide in my sisterly feelings without prejudice to prior claims ; but you will not let me treat you with the same confidence. I appeal to your own heart, whether you do not withdraw yourself from us upon all occasions."

"*Us !* — now there's the very thing I cannot bear ! — to be for ever put upon the same footing in my own sister's affection with a stranger and a foreigner.

"Dearest Charlotte ! how can you be so unreasonable ? Be assured, that my affection for you is the same it ever was, and wholly independent of any other attachment I may form ; and have you not specified *two* claims, that in themselves call for the kindness of feeling minds ? But when you add to them, that she is an orphan, with no other stay upon

earth but our family, surely you justify at once every affectionate attention that can be shown her, even were she not the charming being she actually is!"

But Charlotte *was* unreasonable, and prejudiced, moreover. "I hate foreigners!" she said, "and can never feel a partiality for strangers:—her being an unprotected orphan, indeed, is something to be sorry for, if she had not come to make so much mischief; but as it is, I'm sure I only wish we were well rid of her."

And instead of being softened by Julia's communication, Charlotte fell back into the disposition she had been in prior to the accident, which had somewhat subdued her dislike, and kept as much aloof from her sister as ever.

## CHAP. X.

SIR Arthur Delmaine's feelings were *too severely harassed by the distressing* annunciation of the surgeon, to leave him any chance of recovering sufficient composure to join his family at dinner that day. He pretended an engagement,—wandered out—had recourse to an inn at W.; when he found himself faint with long fasting—and finally betook himself to bed on his return home, complaining of a head-ache, to which he was occasionally subject, and which, therefore, created no alarm.

But repose was not to be found on his pillow that night ; he arose in unspeakable anguish of mind, and felt he could know no relief till he had breathed forth his misery to its object.

He made himself sure of an uninterrupted conference with his ward, while Lady Delmaine took her daughters to a morning's musical practice with a neighbouring family ; and having gone out to breakfast, as if on an errand of business, he returned in a few minutes after the carriage had driven from the door, and found Adelaide alone in the drawing room.

“ Adelaide ! dearest Adelaide ! child of my fondest affection ! ” he wildly exclaimed, “ it is not in language to speak the agony I endure, in being the cause of this irremediable misfortune ! That sightless eye will be\* my death. ”

The passionate fervor of his utterance again found its way but too powerfully to the heart of his ward, and in a voice tremulous from ecstasy, she replied —

“ Is it possible that you, who have ever so slightly regarded personal attractions, should be thus strongly affected by what I am perfectly satisfied to forego ? ”

“Impossible, Adelaide ! impossible ! at your age — with your claims to beauty ! A blemish like this must make you hate its unhappy cause, whenever your eye rests upon your glass.”

“O Sir Arthur ! I told you with truth, what I now doubly feel — if by the loss of both my eyes I could have thought to obtain sympathy so tender, I would have deemed it cheaply purchased,” she replied, with a burst of enthusiasm.

“Oh God ! Oh God ! this is too much !” he cried ; and concealing his face with his hands, a flood of tears forced their way.

At this instant they were startled by the sound of carriage wheels, which, however, they felt sure would produce no intruder, as Lady Delmaine was out ; so they remained undisturbed, until the drawing-room door suddenly opening, Charlotte came running in for one of the music books that had been forgotten. She stopped on seeing her father seated by

Adelaide on the sofa, with his face concealed on one end of it.

“ Dear papa ! are you worse ? ” in a tone of anxious surprise.

“ I am not very well, my dear ; a little overcome with quick walking — it will go off in a few minutes. I charge you, say nothing of it to your mother ; you know she is too ready to take alarm.”

The obvious confusion of Adelaide, unaccountable even to herself, on the entrance of Charlotte, had sufficiently struck her critical observer to induce her willing compliance with the injunction of silence to her mother ; at the same time that the circumstance was registered on the black list against Adelaide in her mind, though the idea likewise occurred, that this would be a test of her vaunted candour : “ If she imparts this to mamma, I shall think better of her,” she said to herself ; and promising obedience to her father’s wish, she took her music-book, and left the room.

Sir Arthur could not recover himself : he sobbed aloud.

Adelaide, every moment more gratified by the proofs of his affection, employed all her rhetoric to soothe him, but in accents of such exquisite tenderness, as were ill calculated to calm the perturbed state of his feelings, equally alive to the impropriety of betraying sentiments so important to conceal, as well from their object as from his family, and to the misery that had lately taken such distressing possession of him.

“ Adelaide ! my child ! ” he at length said, “ I am ashamed of the weakness which has obliged me to have recourse to subterfuge, for the purpose of blinding Charlotte to the true cause of my distress, lest her representation of it to my wife might have awakened suspicions injurious to the tranquillity of a heart so entirely devoted to me, as the experience of many years has proved her’s to be.”

“ Have no fear for that, my dear

guardian ; Lady Delmaine is quite willing to allow me the next place to herself in your friendship, and I ask but of heaven to make me worthy of obtaining it."

"What mean you, Adelaide? What could lead to such a subject between you?" he asked, in evident alarm.

"Her ignorance of the true nature of my pure and devoted attachment to you ; and she was quite satisfied with my explanation — only telling me to distrust myself, and have recourse to her upon every occasion."

Sir Arthur was thunderstruck : — he felt convinced his wife must already have imbibed suspicions inimical to her peace, which had prompted her entering upon a conversation of this kind ; and he anxiously enquired into the particulars.

Adelaide repeated them accurately.

"I earnestly entreat this may not be followed up!" said Sir Arthur, when she had concluded ; "you will unnecessarily plant thorns in her breast, whilst you are



wholly unconscious of what you are doing. Trust to *me* ! — who have your welfare too much at heart to suffer you to incur any injury from sentiments which could not be fairly understood,\* or their full purity appreciated by any but myself, who will watch over you with more than parental tenderness. I cannot now pursue the subject : it requires calmer deliberation than I am at this moment able to give it. I must have recourse to the solitude of my study. Heaven bless you !” And with an agitated step he withdrew ; the conflict in his bosom severely increased by this unexpected communication.

He was sufficiently acquainted with Lady Delmaine’s placid disposition to judge that it could be no slight stimulus that had roused her to a proceeding of such unwonted vigour, as entering upon a topic of so much delicacy with Adelaide. He felt, too, that if her suspicions did not in some degree extend to him,

she would naturally have spoken to himself upon the subject; for until now she had never had a thought that lay not as open to him as to herself. Thus far he had concluded, that her silence respecting his ward's devotion to him arose from her seeing it in the light he had also long considered it—as filial love and veneration carried to excess; but now he anticipated consequences the most perplexing, and of a nature that would require no common degree of prudence to avert. In this quality his ward was unfortunately altogether deficient; indeed, he had some reason to think she regarded it with contempt.

His own conduct to Lady Delmaine, he fully determined, should be made up of every sort of attention that could supply the place of the affection he was but too sensible was now withdrawn from her. Forbid it every honest feeling that could inform the breast of man!—the excellent woman, to whom he had been

indebted for so many years of uninterrupted happiness, should have her peace destroyed by the waywardness of his heart. Grievous enough to himself was the consciousness of his change ; but it would amount to distraction, to have it become evident to Matilda ! Guarded in the extreme he must be ! — deep, deep in the inmost recess of his soul must the fatal truth lie buried ! — nay, the beloved object herself must not have the slightest cause to suspect the real nature of his feelings. Gracious heaven ! should he not be utterly unpardonable — a monster to be spurned from society ! — were he capable of fostering those sentiments in her to which he perceived her but too prone ? Enchanting visionary ! — fascinating enthusiast ! — was it possible not to adore her ? But over his private feelings, who had any right of scrutiny ? — *they* were *his own* ! — thoughts, fortunately, so long as *he* was not liable to the world's controul, *his* actions were blameless !

## Mistaken moralist ! —

“ Guard well thy thoughts ! — our thoughts are heard in heaven.”

But this did not occur to the strictly honorable man of the world, settling his plan in the full sincerity of upright intention, and nothing mistrusting the defective basis on which he rested.

It has been said, with undeniable justness, that “ It is easier to *be* honest than to *seem* so.” Had Sir Arthur but fairly calculated the difficulty of the task he was imposing upon himself, in the eternal restraint that must be required to save the wretchedness that was fast gaining upon him from detection, he would even upon that principle have struggled to conquer, instead of merely to conceal his feelings.

Meanwhile, poor Adelaide, having attained the very zenith of her wishes, in the unequivocal conviction of the deep interest she had inspired, delirious with

joy, hugged her misfortune to her breast, as many an unwary female has been known to do, and deemed it felicity. She retired to her own apartment, to give way to the undisturbed enjoyment of her rapturous feelings in their fullest extent.

On returning from the morning's engagement, Julia hastened to her friend. "Dearest Adelaide, what is the matter with my father? Charlotte told me he appeared unwell when she returned for her music-book, and now he is locked into his study, and will not admit me."

"He forbid Charlotte to tell it, for fear to alarm your mamma."

"She only told it to me—but what was it?"

"Such exquisite happiness to me, Julia!—oh! I can almost not speak it!—it was excess of feeling for the loss of my eye that overpowered him even to shedding tears."

"But why should he want mamma

not to know that? I'm sure its very natural, and no more than we have all done."

"You are all very good, and I am very grateful indeed for it; but he thought Lady Delmaine would perhaps misunderstand his feelings."

"I wonder he should think so! Did you not tell him he was quite mistaken?"

"Yes; and I told him what had passed between her and me; but he said he knew Lady Delmaine better than I did, and I should unintentionally plant thorns in her breast by my confidence, and he would take charge himself of guarding me against being misled by my feelings."

"Wasn't that very odd," said the single-minded Julia, "when he is himself the object of them? You would not be likely to confess them to him, you know, if they were improper."

"Certainly not! If I thought them so

I would be my own guard against every possibility of detection, from a sense of my degradation in harbouring them ; — my pride would be my best friend there ; — but you, Julia, know me too well to have any such fears for me.”

“ Yes ; I am sure I should sooner doubt myself than you, Adelaide — but only you promised mamma, you know ! ”

“ Well, it will be time enough to discuss, if I am to be guided by my guardian or Lady Delmaine, when I have any thing important to tell.”

Julia could not help thinking it would have been better to have given that importance to what had now occurred, since it had produced so strong an effect upon Adelaide ; but she was in the habit of submitting her judgment to that of her friend, and she gave up the point.

Not so, Charlotte ; she suspected the *tête-a-tête* to have been preconcerted ; and was eagerly looking for the proof of Adelaide’s sincerity in the acknowledgment

she might make of it to Lady Delmaine. Vain was the attempt to justify Adelaide from this imputation; it only ended, as had often happened before, in making Charlotte more angry with her sister, and more exasperated against the culprit.

To the great annoyance of those chiefly concerned, Lady Barbara returned to the Manor shortly before 'dinner-time, and Adelaide's ecstasies received a speedy check. In pursuance of the plan he had laid down for himself, Sir Arthur treated his ward at table with a reserve so unexpected, that its effect upon her could not escape notice — a reserve increased beyond what he was aware of, by the dread of the emotion he might betray, if he ventured to turn his eyes upon the disfigurement he expected to behold, as she now first appeared with the eye uncovered. On the other hand, his attentions to Lady Delmaine were carried to so marked an excess, as almost equally challenged observation.



Sir Arthur had not sufficiently appreciated the difficulties of the task he had engaged in. Unused to every species of duplicity, he had hitherto gone the straight road his feelings led him : his affections had all been what they ought, and his actions, arising naturally out of them, had without affectation been such as to convince the objects best entitled to his solicitude, that it was exclusively directed to their happiness. *Now* the case was becoming widely different : he was a stranger in the course he deemed it expedient to pursue, and was attempting to reconcile impossibilities — what to an honourable, candid mind, at least, must ever prove so — an *apparent* countenance of affection to the woman from whom his heart was estranged, and a show of indifference to her who possessed his whole soul.

A man of gallantry *might* have managed such a matter — a woman of intrigue very certainly *would* — but Sir Arthur had no

habits of either gallantry or intrigue, and he made a bad hand of it.

When the gentlemen came into the drawing room for their coffee, Adelaide was standing near the door, thoughtfully occupied in turning over some drawings ; her guardian took the opportunity of saying in a whisper, as he passed her — “ Do not mistake my motives ! your happiness is my first object, whatever appearance I may assume.”

Her brow was instantly cleared ; neither the whisper nor its effect were unobserved.

“ I must not delay my interference much longer,” thought the well-meaning General ; “ that scowl of Lady Barbara’s is portentous !” But the undertaking was critical, and he was somewhat puzzled how to set about it.

He went on revolving the best mode of procedure, at the expence of his night’s rest, and had made but little progress in determining upon any thing next morn-

ing. An understanding seemed to be taking place between the guardian and the ward, which posed him. The most simple course would be to open the poor girl's eyes to her own danger ; but Sir Arthur might resent his officiousness. He had once thought of speaking to Sir Arthur himself upon the subject, but he was aware of a change in him that was rather alarming ; — from his easy, open, affectionate manners to all around him, he was becoming cautious and constrained, the obvious result of having something to conceal : — so decidedly a man of the world besides, it was not probable he should *unconsciously* be led astray. Speaking to him, therefore, might either produce a quarrel, or being made a party in a very undesirable and embarrassing confidence, without doing any sort of good. — Lady Delmaine ? — though what could *she* do ? — only experience misery from which ignorance might save her, if that mischievous harpy will but leave her to her fortunate

blindness. — Should he address himself to Julia? — to her it seemed almost necessary to speak, to save her from the evident danger she was in, of becoming an accessory to Adelaide's delusion, and to the mischief that must ensue; — but then, to make her a spy upon her father, — or even suggest to her the possibility of such a lapse from rectitude in him, was not to be thought of: — still something 'must be done, or that keen-eyed old vixen would work up a broil, in which the happiness of all would be overset.

Ere he could settle how best to put his kind intentions into practice, the attempt was impeded by a sudden call to the coast, to meet a favourite niece on her way home, and he was obliged to set out at an hour's warning.

## CHAP. XI.

THE General's niece, whose arrival had broken so abruptly into his cogitations, was the widow of Lord Samford, lately released from the shackles of matrimony; though these, in truth, had proved no otherwise galling than as the ill state of her husband's health had for some time past condemned her to be guided by the advice of his physicians in the choice of their residence, and not by her own will and pleasure, which was rather apt to diverge from the routine of strict domesticity. She was a sentimentalist in the fullest latitude of the German school; consequently a Platonist, a philosopher, and what not? —

“All things by turns, and nothing long.”

Her husband, “good easy man!” was

very rich, very fond, very good humour-ed, and allowed her the full swing of all her fancies ; till the breaking of a blood-vessel compelled him to seek a warmer climate, and gave an inconvenient check to the interesting intercourse her ladyship had been cultivating with the husband of her most intimate friend ; *he* being detained in England by parliamentary and other public avocations. She had thus far combined her attentions to her lord, with those due to her admirer, in so edifying a way, as might have afforded specimens of pathos worthy the pen of a Goethe or a Kotzebue, and talked sentiment with such wonderful volubility, as served to blind the world, so far as the world was willing to be blinded, and her husband altogether. Being now, however, unluckily obliged to make her election between duty and inclination, Lady Samford had judiciously abided by what the world in general would expect from her ; a determination,

much facilitated by reflections on the rich inheritance in prospect from her old bachelor uncle. Indeed, so cautious had she been not to lose ground in that quarter, that she had bestowed all the ingenuity upon deceiving him, which the *bonhommie* of Lord Samford had rendered superfluous at home, and she had succeeded to the height of her wish, for the General believed her immaculate. This persuasion naturally enough led him to conclude she would prove a most useful auxiliary\* in his plan of operations, by offering an asylum from the house of Sir Arthur, when he should have succeeded in exciting an alarm in Adelaide's mind respecting the dangers of her present situation.

He lost no time, after their meeting, in imparting the state of the case, and his own zealous purpose, to Lady Samford, who readily concurred in any thing he pleased; mentally reserving to herself the power of acting by the object of his

solicitude, as she might see proper. His project was to stop for a night, with his niece, at his old friends the Delmaines', on the way to her jointure-house; the place of residence at which she deemed it most decorous to pass the remaining months appropriated to her weeds. These, her profound sense of her unhappy bereavement had induced her, she said, to extend to the fashion of former days; for she could not help being greatly shocked at the curtailments in the demonstrations of grief upon such occasions that had gradually been taking place in England; a sentiment which perfectly succeeded in the intended effect of touching the heart of her good uncle. He had found some difficulty in obtaining her consent to the visit he proposed, as she contended it was quite contrary to her own feeling of the respect due to the memory of the dear deceased; and she, finally, only gave way, she assured the General, be-



cause she could refuse him nothing. Extremely gratified by this declaration, of which, judging by himself, he never doubted the sincerity, he went on to bespeak her friendship for Adelaide, in whose praise he delighted to expatiate. She listened with dutiful deference, again assuring him, as he concluded his harangue, of the uselessness of urging any extraneous motive, whilst it was so delightful to her, upon every occasion, to make his wish her law.

The General now intimated his intended introduction of his niece, to his friends at Hawkwood Manor, with a request that she might be secured against the intrusion of any chance visitors during her short stay, as her calamitous loss still dwelt too heavily on her spirits to admit of her bearing the sight of any strangers but his own particular friends. This being of course acceded to, he arrived on the appointed day, with (as

far as external appearance could substantiate the fact) his *deeply mourning* charge.

Lady Samford's person was attractive, and her manners easy and elegant; it was therefore natural to expect, as her uncle did, that Adelaide would, from this harmony with her own, be immediately prejudiced in her favour; but her mind was too predominantly occupied with its present feelings to pay much attention to objects unconnected with them: Lady Samford, on her part, seemed also to keep aloof from her uncle's *protégée*. The kind-hearted veteran did not quite understand this; but, too full of his project to be easily checked in the prosecution of it, he still satisfied himself he had at least effected something in their mutual introduction: he would now only see his niece well settled in her home, and then return to pursue his operations, by seeking a private interview with Adelaide, in which he trusted he should be able to

make her fully aware of the precipice on which she stood, and obtain her consent to the only means that occurred to him of avoiding the danger. He could have no doubt of Lady Samford *then* being ready to lend her assistance in the way he wished.

On questioning her, after their departure from Hawkwood, as to the reason of her backwardness, when he had taken such pains to prepare her for friendly demonstrations of interest, — she only said, “she had not experienced the attraction requisite to form a friendship at first sight — feelings could neither be excited nor suppressed at will, but her *actions* should always be governed by his pleasure.”

Satisfied with this assurance, he returned full of zeal in his good cause, and found as early an opportunity as he could desire of entering upon the task he had assigned himself, from the accidental confinement of Julia with a cold, and

Adelaide's having in consequence strolled alone into one of the most solitary walks to indulge in her own meditations.

He saw her go, and followed her steps; they were soon overtaken, as she sauntered pensively on along a sunny path, under the shelter of a thick holly hedge.

"May I, without being deemed importunate, break in upon your lonely musings?" he began.

The answer was more civil than sincere, for in fact the intrusion was unwelcome, though she little foresaw to what it was to lead; but she courteously said, "his company was always acceptable."

"My dear young lady, I have long been wishing for an opportunity of having some private conversation with you."

Adelaide looked surprised — "With me?" she said.

"I have to apologise for the freedom I shall take in what I am about to say —

the interest you inspire must plead my excuse — you make a friend of every one that approaches you.”

“ I’m sure you are very obliging,” she replied, a little at a loss at this exordium, which alarmed her, though without very well knowing why.

“ And though surrounded by friends, you still stand greatly in need of one,” he went on.

“ I can never feel such a want while protected by my guardian.”

“ ’Tis in that very protection, however, that your danger lies.”

Adelaide started, and with some pleasure answered, “ If an angel should come down from heaven to tell me so, I would discredit my senses sooner than believe him.”

“ This security is exactly what will prove your ruin !”

With a look of the most indignant astonishment, she exclaimed, “ Merciful Heaven, General ! this from you ! and

of my guardian! the first and best of men! and *your* friend so many years!— Is it possible for you to suspect him?”

“*Suspect* is not the word, my good young lady; he never can lie open to the suspicion of *intending* wrong; but, believe me, the very best of us are liable to being misled!”

“I think his understanding and experience might be considered as quite on the level with his heart, which I believe no one has ever yet doubted;” she spoke with angry warmth.

“Possibly his heart and his understanding were never before at vari-

“What is it that you would insinuate?” she eagerly enquired.

“I would *insinuate* nothing, but speak out *frankly*, my dear:—however reluctant to give you pain, as I see I do, though my motive will acquit me of unkind meaning. Your youth and inexperience blind you to the lengths your

enthusiastic admiration of your guardian is leading you."

" Pardon me, Sir ! so far from being blinded, I glory in it ; — it is the vital principle of my existence ! — pure as his virtues, — ardent as pure ! "

" Ardent enough, in all conscience ! " interrupted the General, " and pure at this moment, I make no manner of doubt ; how long it might continue so, when growing mutual, is more than frail mortality could safely venture to conjecture. "

" Mutual ! " cried Adelaide, " O that I could recal the blissful transport of one ecstatic moment when I did believe it was ! — but, no, no, he is cased in cold, unfeeling reserve, as in a coat of mail. "

" Would to heaven I did not so clearly discern its vulnerable part ! "

" O where ? — where ? — point that out to me, and I will bless you the longest day I live ! " she exclaimed, with wild energy.

The worthy man, who was no great adept in following the bent of romantic imaginings, and had been too much engrossed by his own honest purpose, to attend very minutely to the effects he was producing, now exultingly said, "Aye! I knew I was not mistaken in you, my dear, and that you only wanted to have the matter made plain to you to recover the right path; — why, 'tis as clear as day-light, that the very reserve he affects, arises from the consciousness of too tender feelings for you: the constraint of his manner must strike every one."

"Heavenly powers!" ejaculated Adelaide, now wholly absorbed by her own rapturous emotions, "I see the gates of paradise open before me in this blessed suggestion!"

"Why, child, you are mad!" thundered forth the astonished General, — "stark mad! upon my soul!"

The angry tone in which this was ut-



tered aroused her from the delirium of joy to which she was giving way, on hearing such a solution of the altered manner of her guardian, which had latterly borne heavy on her heart ; and she gazed on him in wonder, as one awakened out of a trance.

“ The gates of paradise ! ” he continued ; “ the gates of hell, you are more likely to see opened, in encouraging feelings so unwarrantable ! You came into a family of love and peace, and by all that’s sacred, you are converting it into a scene of misery and mutual distrust ! ”

“ O ! ” clasping her hands, “ what a cruel denunciation to one who would sacrifice herself for every individual of it ! ”

“ Words ! — words ! — a fine sentence is soon spoken, but give me deeds ! Are you not alienating the husband from his wife ? ”

“ O no ! no ! Lady Delmaine herself is satisfied, I am incapable of such a thought ; — she is satisfied to accord me

the second place in Sir Arthur's affection."

"Lady Delmaine!" he reiterated, in the utmost surprise, "impossible! or by heaven, she's as mad as yourself!" — A long pause here ensued, during which the tears coursed each other in large drops down the cheeks of the agitated girl. —

"Lady Delmaine satisfied!" he at length resumed, "Well! — then I wash my hands of the affair, and make you over to her guidance."

"You are angry. O do not be offended with me, I conjure you! I am very sensible of your kind intentions; believe me, I know how to value them; do not let me lose your friendly interest, but exert it to save me from the severity of Lady Barbara! I have not, indeed, so many friends, that I can spare one so good to me as yourself!"

Softened by her tears, as well as this affectionate appeal, the General relaxed

his contracted brow, shook hands with her, expressed sorrow for having distressed her, promised to screen her as much as possible from the sarcasms she dreaded, and every other evil in his power ; and was rather glad to see the end to a conference to which he had not found himself as competent as he expected.

His life had chiefly been spent in camps, which left him but little time to attend to the fair sex ; he was, therefore, not deep read in female character ; and the polished courtesy of Adelaide's manners had not prepared him for the tenacious adherence to her romantic visions she had evinced. He expected to have found her all pliability and thankfulness for being set right, and the disappointment produced the burst of anger that had effectually put all his intended calm expostulations to the rout. His thoughts, therefore, again reverted to the assistance of his niece, who would manage the sub-

ject with more delicacy and better effect than he could do. Women understand each other's freaks and vagaries, and know how to treat them with a gentler hand than we do : — God bless the dear creatures all ! — “ So dry up your tears, my dear,” he finally said, “ and make allowance for a soldier's roughness, who means you kindly, though he has not, perhaps, hit upon the best way of showing it :” and with another warm grasp of the hand he left her, to go and revolve in his own mind, the means of bringing Lady Samford's interference into play ; for the good gentleman saw more clearly than before, how necessary it was that something should be done, though like other good gentlemen, of better intentions than judgment, he certainly, for the present, had made matters rather worse than he found them.

## CHAP. XII.

ADELAIDE had been so deeply wounded by the late reserve of her guardian, as well as his marked and excessive attentions to his wife, as in some degree to check the exuberance of her feelings towards him ; but the new light in which the General had placed his motives now broke upon her with all the additional force of contrast, and her platonic hallucinations were wound up to their most extravagant pitch. In this frame of mind, she repaired to Julia's chamber, to communicate the happy prospect which again opened to her in the General's view of Sir Arthur's sentiments.

Julia's countenance did not brighten at this statement, as her friend had expected it would. " I know not how it is,

Adelaide," she said, with a doubtful shake of the head, "but my mind mis-gives me, that there is something wrong in all this."

"Shame on such misgivings, Julia! Have I been deceived in you? And is this all the progress we have made in liberating you from the fetters of vulgar prejudice?"

"I'm sure I don't mean to contend with you, Adelaide, who have thought and read so much upon the subject; you must know better than I—only, you see, papa does not altogether coincide in your opinions, or why should he be so solicitous, as the General says he is, to conceal what you take such pride in proclaiming?"

"The fear to create uneasiness in Lady Delmaine prompts it, you may be sure."

"But if he thought it quite right to cherish platonic love for you, he would soon bring over mamma to the same

opinion, for she never seems to put her own into competition with his."

" Oh! but you know she is so completely subjugated by that cruel Lady Barbara, that she does not judge for herself."

" I assure you, you are quite mistaken there, for I know many points in which they differ widely, and particularly about you, dear Adelaide."

" Yes, yes, I believe you are right! I spoke inconsiderately, and am ashamed of such apparent ingratitude for your dear mother's excessive kindness; but somehow I feel as if I were acquiring an irritable habit, that makes me judge unfairly often. Heigh-ho! I am sadly changed of late, and cannot tell what ails me; if Sir Arthur would only let me have recourse to him, and not throw me to such a distance, I am certain he could assist me to correct my temper; his own, you see, is never ruffled."

" But since he has such valid reasons

for his conduct, why not have recourse to mamma? — for to her you can have access at all times, you know.”

“ I did not say that his reasons seemed *to me* valid; I only supposed what they might be: on the contrary, I think it should be for the happiness of all, that he should convince Lady Delmaine upon the subject; and I am sure if he would only put some of Goethe’s works into her hands, they would go far towards it.”

“ Then I give you my word, Adelaide, that is the very author papa speaks of in terms of such strong reprobation, that he even interdicted me from ever looking into him.”

“ Impossible!” cried Adelaide.

“ Indeed it is true! he said there had been more injury done to the cause of morality, by his delusive substitution of sentiment for principle, than by any of the more avowedly immoral publications that had ever come from the press.”

“ He must have been thinking of some



other author, for Goethe's works are renowned all over Europe for their transcendent refinement, their pathos, their eloquence :—O where is there any thing to compare to the Sorrows of Werter ?—to Stella ?—and so many others ?”

“ But don't you recollect how they were all abusing ‘The Stranger,’ the last time that —”

“ Ah ! there, now,” interrupted Adelaide, “ I knew you were confounding—that's Kotzebue's—your father might perhaps prohibit *him*.”

“ Well, no matter,” said Julia ; “ as far as I am concerned, I need fear no mischief from any of them, for I take no pleasure in German now,” with a deep-drawn sigh. “ It was only because Augustus was learning it, you know, that I was so eager about it. But I feel this, Adelaide, that I am so deficient in the energy your system requires, that if ever Augustus were to become your husband,”—another heavy sigh, — “ I should have

very serious scruples in allowing myself to feel for him as I now do."

"Augustus shall never be my husband; rest assured, dear Julia! but I am wholly incapable of narrow-minded jealousy, at all events, that I can venture to answer for."

Here a tap at the door interrupted the colloquy, and introduced Pierre in a very visible state of disturbance, prefacing what he had to say with begging *mille pardons* for the trouble he must give his lady, but he could not delay a moment demanding justice, through her means, for the affront he had received at the hands of the kitchen maid; "*Un soufflet, Mademoiselle! ni plus ni moins! Je sais aussi bien qu'homme au monde le respect qu'on doit au beau sexe, mais un soufflet! — je ne le souffrirai de qui que ce soit!*" and his dignity required that she should be made to ask his pardon, or be dismissed.

A good deal amused with this kitchen-stuff representative of the *fair sex*, the

young friends enquired, with as much gravity as they could command, into the particulars of the case, when it appeared, that on having applied to his friend Louis for an English phrase, expressive of his admiration of her, Louis had indulged a propensity to waggersy by putting words into his mouth of so contrary a tendency as provoked the irascible damsel to return his compliment by a smart box on the ear.

Adelaide had no great difficulty in pacifying him, when made sensible of the provocation he had unintentionally given; and she dismissed him with a strict injunction to be very careful of exciting contention in the family, as it would greatly distress her that any one belonging to her should occasion quarrels.

“ *Mademoiselle n’a qu’à ordonner; dès qu’il n’y va pas de l’honneur! mais au diable si l’on ne m’auroit pas rendu raison du soufflet! — à moins de la plaisanterie, pourtant, qui raccorde tout,*” and Pierre took himself off with a consequential step. But

the silly affair did not end with the diversion it had afforded the girls.

The affronted female was niece to Lady Barbara's own woman, Mrs. Armstrong, and had lately been introduced by her into the family, with a view to watch what was going on, and transmit her remarks, through her aunt, to her Ladyship; for whose object a fitter person could not well have been selected. Lizzy was an artful, mischief-making baggage, who could work a great deal out of a little, and even something out of nothing, when it suited her purpose.

It has been stated, that Lady Barbara's observation upon Adelaide's accident, when Sir Arthur carried her into the drawing-room, had not fallen to the ground. It had been repeated by the housekeeper to Lady Delmaine's maid — not indeed concurring in its justness — on the contrary, as an instance of Lady Barbara's ill-will to the young foreigner, whose condescending sweetness of man-

ner made her extremely popular in the house—but the matter had thus become a topic of occasional discussion in the house-keeper's room, and every circumstance as it occurred, been descanted on. Some of these, it will be recollected, were of a kind to afford food for malignity to thrive on. Such was Sir Arthur's having made his way into the young lady's room, in the absence of all her attendants, with the mischievous effects resulting from it, so obvious to the nurse, who, however, had only mentioned them in the simplicity of her zeal for the patient's well-doing. Such, his early return from his ride, quite contrary to his usual custom ; his immediately resorting to the drawing-room, in which he scarcely ever set foot in a morning, and where Adelaide, who received him alone, might naturally be conjectured to have been awaiting him ; then,—the great favour into which he had latterly taken Pierre, making it evident ~~that~~ *he* was in the confidence. All these

suspicious occurrences, ingeniously combined with some slight improvements to heighten their effect, had been collected and reported for Lady Barbara's use, who, — interweaving them with her own observations and inductions, and, perhaps, with some inferences of other observers, as, for instance, of her friends, the Weybridges, — found herself armed with means sufficient, if well employed, to overturn the peace of the whole family ; and was now only waiting for an auspicious occasion of introducing the subject to her niece, and overwhelming her with irresistible conviction. Not that, in truth, she intended the consequences her intemperate interference was likely to produce, but in her excessive solicitude for the cause of good morals, she unfortunately overlooked them. The little foolish story we have just spoken of came to her in the shape of an accusation against poor Adelaide, as encouraging her servants in insolence, and quarrels

with those of the house, for the sake of showing her power over its master ; and, as it is said that it is ‘ the last feather that breaks the mule’s back,’ so this most absurd and improbable of all the allegations brought against the unconscious culprit, determined, in her Ladyship’s mind, — too profoundly persuaded of her conclusion to mistrust her premises, — the moment of explosion. She sought Lady Delmaine to impart her information, with all the acrimony her own feelings could supply.

But here, as it frequently happens, the very strength of the representations, and the extreme severity with which they were urged, called up opposition in Lady Delmaine’s candid mind ; — she doubted, objected, and disbelieved, till the angry zeal with which the old Lady had entered upon the subject, was changed into ~~wit~~ of a less virtuous description, which, as the conversation continued, grew ~~at~~ length to a transport of rage

that choked her utterance, and caused her finally to fly off with the declaration that she gave them all up to their own mad infatuation, vowing never to enter the house again while that viper continued to be fostered in it. Well had it been for all concerned, had she extended her vow to every species of interference!

Though the virulence with which Lady Barbara had brought forward her accusations, had, for the time being, counteracted their effect, they left their sting behind. A painful impression was produced on the mind of Lady Delmaine, which she in vain endeavoured to shake off. In vain did she recur to the invariable tenor of Sir Arthur's life, — to his undeviating affection, — to his domestic habits, so foreign to every tendency to gallantry during so long a course of years, on all of which her well-grounded confidence in him had ever rested. There was of late an indescribable *something*, which she could neither avoid perceiving,



In regard to the imputed insolence of Adelaide's servants, without attaching any sort of credit to the assertion of its being abetted by their mistress, she deemed it proper to give her a caution, of which she, however, readily saw the futility, when informed of the true and only ground of offence so innocently given ; and it produced some mirth, as well as a transient hope that there might also be either misconception, or great exaggeration in some of the other circumstances stated. It had occurred to her, that such an opening might possibly lead Adelaide to a farther disclosure of her feelings, which, after what had passed between them, she felt that she ought rather to seek than to shrink from, though her mind was now becoming so sore upon the subject, that she did internally shrink from the idea of its being touched on : Adelaide did not, however, put her to the test. After her guardian's prohibition, she persuaded herself she

was not at liberty to act towards Lady Delmaine with the frankness she might otherwise have done, and therefore, went no further than poor Pierre's vindication required.

Lady Barbara had taken her niece's incredulity in such high dudgeon, as to have forthwith ordered her carriage and set off for town: in so doing, she removed from beneath this unhappy roof one incessant cause of irritation. But where were now the happy domestic evenings so delightful during the first year of Adelaide's sojourn in the family? — that social fire-side, so agreeably enlivened by Sir Arthur's conversational powers, — by the perusal of some new and entertaining publication, to which his fine tones in reading, and animated remarks, gave such an increase of interest, — not unfrequently by the taste and spirit with which Adelaide's charming talent of recitation gave effect to the best dramatic works of her own country, or by

her highly-cultivated musical abilities?— evenings of attic enjoyment ; rarely met with in the vortex of a London life, fully appreciated by the sense and feeling of our heroine ; now, alas ! irrecoverably gone by ! while, in their stead, constraint on the one hand, and suspicion on the other, worked their miserable way in spite of every effort made to resist or at least conceal them. Sir Arthur regularly withdrew to his study after tea-time, and often did not again appear. Lady Delmaine, silent and dispirited, scarce ever raised her eyes from her work, Julia's poor state of health incapacitating her from any effort to enliven the scene either by her music or reading aloud. Charlotte grieved, and brooding over all she saw, was but too much out of humour to make any attempts to counteract the obvious discomfort that was gaining ground. Adelaide alone compelled herself to make some exertion towards dispelling the gloom, by volun-

teering her services in reading for the general amusement, but her thoughts so commonly wandered from her subject, as to destroy much of the effect she had been accustomed to produce; and, if perchance she made an occasional remark, with a view to prove to her auditors she was attending to her book, it often only served to evince their corresponding absence of mind, by the irrelevant answer she obtained.

In this dull and comfortless state they were found by the General, when he returned from having seen his niece settled at Samford Lodge.

“Did you ever see such a set of mopes as we are all become?” said Charlotte to him, when they met in the breakfast-room, before the rest of the family, next morning.

“I think, indeed, I can perceive an increase of gloom even in the short space of my absence. Lady Delmaine’s

appearing so unwell must naturally affect you all."

"She does not acknowledge that she is so, though papa says he sees she is getting so nervous that he will not expose her to the hot rooms and late hours of London this season; so Julia's presentation is to be deferred till late in the spring; and if any very material parliamentary business occurs to require his presence, he will go for a short time by himself: so we are likely to have a pleasant winter of it altogether! and I'm sure you never saw such a stupid Christmas here, as the last has been — did you now?"

"Why, I must say, it was not merry; but there was much to damp mirth, — the absence of Augustus for one thing, who enlivens all around him; and even you, my little Charlotte, seem to have forsaken your usual gambols!"

"Gambols indeed! small encourage-

ment to gambols, I'm sure; when instead of a smile one only gets a 'pish,' or a 'pshaw,' or a grave look from mamma, with a 'Can't you find some better employment, Charlotte, than teasing those who wish to be quiet?'"

"But papa used to be amused with your tricks: he takes your part, I suppose?"

"Dear me! no; I think papa is worst of all; and he never comes near us neither but just at meal times; it was only on your account that he staid after tea last night, and then I'm certain he proposed chess to you, that he might not be obliged to converse. I declare I wish with all my heart aunt Barbara would come back, for she would talk at least, and make some of them talk whether they would or no."

"And is she not coming?"

"No!—she went away in a huff, and said she would not come near us again

while that artful French girl remained to set the whole family by the ears."

"It were well the ears of the family were stopped against such cruel and unjust insinuations! — But whose masterly performance is this?" — casting his eyes upon a drawing lately hung up, and desirous of turning the discourse from a subject he thought it improper to encourage Charlotte in enlarging upon.

"Why, that's Mademoiselle d'Hauteroche's! Is it not too provoking to see how she excels in every thing?"

"Take care, Charlotte! that observation carries a very envious sound with it."

"I scorn to envy her, I'm sure; but I am afraid I do hate her as much as aunt Bab does."

"Charlotte! I do not recognise you in such sentiments, and, believe me, they are highly unbecoming!"

Somewhat daunted, she was about attempting to justify herself, by recur-

ring to her aunt's authority, when the entrance of Lady Delmaine put a stop to the conversation.

But too clearly did the worthy man perceive the progress of the mischief, to which he could contrive no possible check, short of Adelaide's removal, at least for a time, — and his thoughts reverted to the expedient of a visit to his niece, which he must contrive in one way or another to bring about. Being sensible of the importance of withholding the true motive from the observation equally of Sir Arthur and Lady Delmaine, he was no sooner alone than he set himself to cogitate upon some ingenious mode of effecting his purpose without exciting suspicion. Stratagems had however never been familiar to his upright mind, and he pondered in vain for some circuitous device; nothing of deeper cunning suggested itself, than going abruptly to Lady Delmaine, as he saw her returning from her ride, with



“ I wish, my dear Lady, you could make it convenient to invite my niece here again.”

It chanced, however, that this simple statement of his wish, (like the *frankness* of that celebrated diplomatist, who always foiled his more manœuvring opponent, by fairly telling the exact object he had in view,) served his purpose more effectually than the best-imagined contrivance could have done; for, although Lady Delmaine was neither a manœuvrer nor a diplomatist, it is very probable that, in the present state of her feelings, any unwonted roundabout proceeding on the part of the honest veteran might have awakened the suspicion of a latent motive, that would have distressingly strengthened the doubts now afloat in her mind. As it was, she, with her habitual disposition to taking things for granted, concluded that he found himself uncomfortable without his niece; and replied, with the greatest good hu-

mour, "that I will with much pleasure." A letter was immediately despatched with the invitation, and she bestowed no farther thought upon the matter.

Much gratified with having accomplished this first step without a why or a wherefore, he next proceeded to consider how he was to secure its producing the intimacy on which he placed such dependence. Here his hopes were a little damped by remembering how completely he had once before failed in this very object; together with which recollection a consciousness did obtrude itself that compliance with his wishes had not uniformly followed his making them known to Lady Samford; but then it was in language so submissively dutiful, that she urged the unanswerable reasons which prevented her complying; and with such *heartfelt grief* she dissented from him, that he was convinced it was against her own inclination she ever resisted his. In the present case, he could not for his

life discover any good reason why intimacy should not be the result of longer acquaintance, and so he would let that part of the business take its chance. And, for once, chance favoured his reliance upon its assistance.

## CHAP. XIII.

But before re-introducing Lady Sanford to Hawkwood Manor, it will be requisite to take a retrospect of the impetuous Mr. Augustus Stanmore's proceedings after his abrupt disappearance from Brook-street.

Had Adelaide made but a slight impression, absence would infallibly and speedily have obliterated it; but he loved for the first time, and with all the fervour of twenty-four; and no sooner did he find himself fairly embarked for Sweden, (that and Russia being the only countries accessible at the time to English travellers,) than he heartily repented of his precipitation, dwelling with unceasing self-reproach on his own folly in not having had recourse to various pos-

sible attempts for softening the obduracy of his mistress, which busy fancy now suggested he might have made. Among the means that occurred to him, Julia's power over her friend's mind might, he thought, have been the most efficacious, and of Julia's inclination to promote his happiness, he could have no doubt. Had she not ever been as a sister to him? and more than once during the voyage, had he taken up his pen to write to her upon the subject, but checked himself by reflecting, that his commencing a correspondence with her might be disapproved of by her parents; and nothing better seemed to remain for him at present, than addressing the effusions of his love, and of his misery, to his guardian, in which he abundantly indulged himself, the moment he set foot on shore. To these Sir Arthur opposed, as might be expected, a great deal of sound sense, philosophical argument, and judicious exhortation; all of which, as might also

be expected, produced as much effect as good advice is wont to do upon such occasions — that is, none whatever — except the conviction in Augustus, that a man at Sir Arthur's time of life could not possibly enter into the feelings of a lover. This northern tour, when originally proposed to the young traveller, was, after devoting some months to the courtly and literary circles of Sweden, to have extended to Russia; but no sooner did the news of the signing the preliminaries of the peace of Amiens reach him, than the irresistible temptation of substituting Paris for Petersburg, took possession of his thoughts. He should be so much nearer at hand if any fortunate circumstance could, by any chance, occur; not that he in the least flattered himself with such a possibility, but to go unnecessarily to a distance so remote, was actually putting it out of the power of fate to befriend him; and prudently securing himself against his guardian's objections, by not

imparting his change of plan until he had effected it, to the surprise of his friends, his next letter, instead of Petersburg, bore the date of Paris.

Whatever Sir Arthur's wishes might have been upon the subject, there could now be little use in stating them; all that remained, was to endeavour to make his ward's residence there as advantageous as possible, by obtaining for him introductions to some distinguished characters, who he found still continued in existence amidst the wreck caused by the atrocious events of the Revolution. He also took the chance of adding a letter to a former friend of his own, in case she might have been providentially spared from the general ruin, and could by any means be discovered by Augustus. This was a Comtesse de Montménil, who had been in London on a visit to a relation (the then French ambassador there), during the last years of poor Louis the Sixteenth, and who now, past her me-

ridian, retained, together with an unblemished reputation, that peculiar grace of manner and conversation which characterised the *salons* of Paris, prior to the revolutionary overthrow of all elegance, as well as of all decorum.

A sufficient intimacy had been cultivated between the Delmaines and this amiable woman, to justify a claim being laid to her friendly attentions, and even admonitions, if wanted, for Augustus. Happy might the young Englishman be deemed in former days, who gained an introduction of this kind ! For the elderly Frenchwoman who took him by the hand, not only introduced him into her choice *côterie*, but, with a freedom of enquiry into his proceedings, not exactly consonant to refined English ideas though highly useful in its result, guarded the inexperienced young man from many a snare ; or, perhaps, with still more zealous friendliness, extricated him when involved. Madame de Montménil was just the person to take this sort of charge upon her.



Sir Arthur had, in his letter to Augustus, enclosing the introduction, dwelt with great satisfaction on the advantages it would afford him in point of society ; for if the Countess, by any possibility, had had the peculiar happiness to escape unmolested by the revolutionary tribunals, he did not doubt but with her such a *ré-union* would be found, as would give him some notion of what Paris had been under the *ancien régime*, — the *agrémens* of which had made an impression on Sir Arthur during his short diplomatic career, that he still reverted to with unabated interest.

Augustus was not in a frame of mind to expect much more pleasure from society here, than he had found in it at Stockholm ; nevertheless, in this instance, in addition to the duty of complying with his guardian's desire, he had a motive of his own to prompt his obedience, as it appeared possible that, among the unfortunate *ci-devants*, he

might chance to meet with some remaining relations of Mlle. d'Hauteroche. He therefore determined to lose no time in seeking information from his banker on the subject, who was able to tell him that the Countess had not only personally escaped the terrors of those times, but had had the almost singular good fortune to retain possession of her *hôtel*, where she now was. Delaying no longer than till the usual evening visiting hour, he called for his *remise* and set forth.

The dismally dark exterior of the *hôtel*, together with the delay in obtaining any notice of the repeated attacks of the *laquais de place* on the *porte cochère*, led Augustus to express a doubt of being at the right door.

“ *Ah ! par exemple ! ce seroit un peu fort de me tromper à l'hôtel Montménil !* ” said l'Œillet, “ *Monsieur n'a donc peut-être pas entendu dire que j'ai eu l'honneur de servir la famille de Mde. la Comtesse depuis mon enfance ?* ”

Augustus, with a smile, answered, he really had not heard it.

“ *Pardi ! c’est pourtant bien connu ça,*” with a look of surprise.

“ And you quitted them at the revolution ?”

“ *Monsieur me prend donc pour un misérable ? — pour un ingrat ? — Voyez ce que c’est que les révolutions ! — On ne croit plus à la fidélité de personne !*”

“ Why did you leave their service then ?”

“ *Est-ce ma faute, à moi, donc ? — N’ai-je pas demandé à deux genoux qu’on me retînt — sans gages même — jusqu’à la contre-révolution ? — Jamais M<sup>de</sup>. la Comtesse n’en a voulu entendre parler.*”

“ She probably thought it would be more advantageous for you to seek a service among those in power.”

“ *Qui ! — moi ! — Monsieur ? — Servir ces gueua de nouveaux riches ! — Ce n’est pas à un brave garçon comme l’Eillet qu’il falloit venir proposer ça ! — On seroit bien venu à me faire cet affront, vraiment.*”

“ And a nouveau riche might also

have distrusted those who had been attached to the *ci-devants*."

"*Ah ! pour cela, pardonnez-moi, Monsieur ! — Ils sont trop heureux de nous retenir pour les mettre un peu au fait des manières des vrais nobles.*"

Extremely amused with the simplicity, honesty, and self-conceit of his servant, Augustus would have carried on the dialogue, but that the final appearance of the portress put a stop to it. She was an old woman, whose remuneration for acting as porter was the liberty of keeping a small shop of lace and perfumery in the little apartment withinside the gate; and who, in reply to the somewhat sharp remonstrance of l'Œillet, for letting the visitors of Mde. la Comtesse wait so long, pleaded her having been carrying some little offering from her perfumery, which she had hoped might have proved acceptable. "*Mais elle se passe de tout, et ne se plaint de rien,*" said the old woman.

The desolate aspect of the court, over-

grown with long grass, did not catch the eye of the visitor, as all was darkness around ; but the appearance of a female servant with a tallow-candle in her hand, receiving him at the house-door, and conducting him by the light of it through a suite of lofty, spacious, and crewhile magnificent, but now miserably *délabré* apartments, to the boudoir where the Countess was sitting, offered so striking a representation of fallen greatness, as impressed him with a very melancholy anticipation of his visit.

In this boudoir, however, lighted by a brilliant Argand lamp, and sitting over a cheerful blazing fire, he was received with so serene and even animated a countenance by the once wealthy possessor, and such warm and lively demonstrations of pleasure at the proof his visit gave of the continued remembrance of her esteemed friends, “ *ces chers Delmaines,*” that the contrast between her situation and her mind affected him too forcibly to be able wholly to conceal his emotion.

“ *Eh bien!—Oui!*” she said, answering to the expression of his looks, for of course he had not uttered any thing to betray his feelings to her—“ *Eh bien! oui!—voilà où nous en sommes!—trop heureux encore d’avoir conservé un gîte et sa tête!—car véritablement, pendant un temps, les têtes tomboient comme grêle, au point qu’en m’éveillant le matin je portois mes mains à la mienne, pour m’assurer qu’elle étoit encore sur mes épaules.*”

He had heard much of French levity, and for a moment believed he was seeing it exemplified, but he soon discovered his injustice. He “hoped she had at least escaped the terrors of imprisonment?”

“ *Mais pour qui me prenez-vous donc?*” she replied, playfully, “ *Il auroit fallu n’avoir ni nom ni biens.*”

“Distinctions dearly paid for at that moment,” Augustus observed; “but you were fortunately liberated, then?”

“ *Par la chute de Robespierre—Une semaine de plus, et c’en étoit fait de moi.*

*Déjà on m'avoit sommé de paroître devant le tribunal révolutionnaire ; mais, lorsqu'on vint me requérir dans la prison par mon nom, auquel j'allois répondre, une amie me prévint en mettant la main sur ma bouche pour me faire taire, et demanda, quelle Comtesse de Montménil on vouloit dire ? — 'La riche, lui répondit-on.' — 'Assurément elle n'est donc pas ici,' reprit-elle ; 'car aucun de nous n'a le sol. — 'En ce cas-là, vous n'êtes pas nôtre fait ; ce seroit temps perdu.' — Et ils nous laissèrent là, mais en disant gaiement, que, riche ou non, ils alloient revenir sous peu de jours faire maison nette."*

Augustus shuddered in expressing his sense of what that moment must have been to her.

*"Mais pas aussi terrible que vous le croyez ! — On étoit si profondément malheureux, que la vie en avoit perdu son prix, et la mort son épouvante. — Et puis, par un singulier hasard, dont je ne saurois assez louer le ciel, je trouvai, dans la même prison,*

*mon parent, l'Abbé Dervieux, dont la piété sublime guidoit sans cesse ma pensée vers la vie à venir ; et quand on est bien pénétré des vérités de sa religion, le néant de ce monde se fait vivement sentir.*

This was spoken with a truth of feeling that struck the young man with respect and admiration.

“ *Et puis,*” she went on, as if fearing to have arrogated too much merit to herself, in vaunting her religious feelings, “ *vous croiriez à peine, combien l'habitude d'envisager la mort de près suffit seule pour la faire affronter avec le courage de l'indifférence — je pourrois vous citer des traits, à cet égard, qui vous paroîtroient héroïques.*”

The entrance of the Abbé Dervieux here gave a turn to the conversation. His appearance perfectly corresponded with the representation the Countess had given of him — the placid cheerfulness of his aged countenance, and humility of his demeanour, bore testimony to the vital principle within.



In the course of the visit, prolonged beyond what the etiquette of a first call quite warranted, — but Augustus was so pleased with his reception, he had not attended to its length, — two or three more *ci-devants* had dropped in. Their situation was much the same with that of the Countess and the Abbé, but widely different, indeed, were their language and feelings. Their haughty discontent and selfish repinings, by exhibiting the contrast of minds still buried in the world, marked, the more strongly, the elevating and consoling influence of that piety, in which *these* had found refuge. Ready to quarrel with her for her equanimity, one of them said, in a tone of reproach —

“ *Mais vous, Madame, qui êtes tombée de si haut — qui aviez un si beau sort !* ” —

“ *C’est ce que je m’efforce d’oublier,* ” she replied.

“ *Ces cruels débris doivent vous le rappeler à chaque instant !* ”

“ *Je ne les regarde que pour rendre*

*grâces à la providence de me les avoir conservés. — Où en serois-je donc, si mon hôtel avoit été vendu comme tant d'autres ?”*

*“ À la bonne heure ! — Je conviendrai que c'est quelque chose que d'être à couvert. — Mais encore — sans gens ! — sans équipage ! — sans table ! — et qui pis est, sans savoir où en trouver chez ses amis ! — Il y a, ma foi ! de quoi se donner au diable !”*

*“ Armez-vous plutôt de ma philosophie,”* said the Countess.

*“ Et quelle est-elle, s'il vous plait, Madame ? — le seul nom m'en fait venir la peau de poule.”*

*“ De passer l'éponge sur le passé, de s'arrêter à ce que le présent offre de bon, et de s'en reposer sur la providence pour l'avenir !”*

*“ Oui-dà ! s'arrêter au bon ? — et où diable le trouver ? — C'est bien, par ma foi, chercher midi à quatorze heures.”*

*“ Comptez au moins pour bon,”* said the Abbé, *“ que la vie est maintenant en sureté.”*

*sur les chenets, comme on dit, est votre fait, vous pouvez compter d'être reçu à bras ouverts, et sans crainte de trouver des espions de police dans nos petits comités."*

The last suggestion surprised Augustus, not being aware of the curious fact, that the system of *espionnage* was carried to a length, at that time, which did not even afford security in what, to all appearance, might be considered as good company, against spies in the pay of Bonaparte. So low had the distresses of emigration brought the minds of some of those unfortunates, that they could now submit even to this indignity for bread !

More than once during his visit, had the name of Adelaide hovered on the lips of her lover, in the idea that her family must have been known to the Countess. The difficulty, however, of pronouncing to strangers a name so deeply interesting, is not easily got over by one truly and devotedly attached.

But there was something so transcendently gracious in the *accueil* of a highly-bred kind-hearted Frenchwoman of the *ancien régime*, and of the Countess in particular, as to be quite irresistible. Augustus felt it almost like having found an old friend, and determined no intimidations or considerations should induce him to let the next opportunity pass without making the enquiry he had so much at heart.

The following morning, L'Œillet begged pardon if he took the liberty to suggest that perhaps Monsieur would like to make enquiry after the health of Madame la Comtesse, and he should take it as a favour if he might be the messenger. Augustus, not conceiving there was any particular call for the enquiry, answered carelessly, that when he had any message to send, it should certainly be by him.

L'Œillet looked disappointed — and again begging pardon, assured his master, that before the overthrow of all good breeding, it was very much the fashion to pay that compliment every day.

“ You seem to have some object in my sending this message,” said his master.

He acknowledged, that he hoped if Madame knew it was he who brought it, he should be admitted to her presence, which always recalled former happy times ; and besides, he had a request to make.

“ Well, then, go by all means ! — with any message of civility you think there is occasion for.”

L’Œillet returned from his embassy with so crest-fallen an air, that it could not escape notice. “ What was the matter ?” Augustus asked. “ Had he been denied admittance ?”

“ *Oh, que non ! — Madame was too condescending ever to do that ; — mais, au bout du compte, notre beau projet a manqué ; il n’y a pas eu moyen de lui faire entendre raison.*”

Augustus’s curiosity was excited, and he asked an explanation. It appeared that l’Œillet and Thérèse had taken the

opportunity of Mr. Stanmore's visit the preceding evening, to lay their heads together for some plan to deceive the countess into accepting a small supply of money at their hands.

“ *Car Monsieur ne se douteroit jamais, à la bonne contenance que fait Madame, qu'il lui arrive souvent de se contenter d'une bavaroise, où elle trempe un morceau de pain, pour tout diner, faute de moyen d'acheter de quoi faire un potage;*” and the poor fellow's eyes filled as he said this; nor were those of his master far from keeping him company. “ *Eh bien! Monsieur! Madame brode, comme ça, des bandes de mousseline que Thérèse va vendre; et elle ajoute quelquefois un peu du sien pour grossir le produit;—mais avec tout ça, vous sentez bien qu'on fait maigre chère;—ce qui n'est pas juste, pendant que moi—qui dois tout à Madame—je suis bien nourri!—Pas vrai, Monsieur?*”

“ And what means of alleviation can you have in your power, my poor fellow?” Augustus asked, much affected.

*“ Ah!—tenez, Monsieur! —je m’en vais vous expliquer ça.—Ma tante est meunière d’un moulin qui étoit sur les terres de Madame la Comtesse. Quand on a vendu les propriétés, son mari l’a achetée. — Eh bien, Monsieur! ce moulin a prospéré depuis lors d’une manière tout extraordinaire, et ma bonne tante voudroit bien en faire passer une partie du produit à Madame, par pure reconnoissance,—comme ça se doit, voyez-vous? —mais son mari, tout révolutionnaire et sans-culotte, se moque bien de la reconnoissance! —ce qui fait endéver ma pauvre tante, —qui trouve pourtant moyen de m’envoyer, de temps en temps, quelque petite chose pour mes étrennes, que j’ai toujours mis de coté jusqu’à ce que ça devînt une petite somme, digne d’être présentée à Madame. — Nous avons donc arrangé, hier-au-soir, Thérèse et moi, qu’à la première occasion où Monsieur m’enverroit faire un compliment à Madame, je lui dirois comme ça; —Sauf respect, Madame, le moulin de Jussieu prospère toujours: et si vous l’avez pour agréable, ma tante*

voudroit vous faire tenir une partie de la rente qui vous est due.—Eh bien, Monsieur ! voilà, mot pour mot, ce que j'ai dit ! et ne m'a-t-elle pas répondu tout drû ;—Cela ne se peut pas, mon pauvre garçon ; vous cherchez à m'en faire accroire ; je reconnois là votre bon cœur !—(Ce n'est pas pour me vanter que je répète ça ; ce sont les propres paroles de Madame la Comtesse ;)—Mais je sais, dit-elle encore, que Mathurin est devenu propriétaire du moulin, et il n'est plus question de rente.—J'ai eu beau protester ; jamais elle n'a voulu en démordre, ni me permettre de lui offrir ma petite somme : — C'est pourtant un peu dur ! — Pas vrai, Monsieur ?”

Augustus drew the back of his hand across his eyes.

“ *Il faut apparemment,*” continued l’Œillet, after a momentary pause, with a very disconsolate air ; “ *il faut apparemment que je ne sais pas mentir assez effrontément :—C’est bien malheureux, ça.*”

Exceedingly moved with the gratitude,



the delicacy, and the simplicity of the man, Augustus sought to comfort him with the assurance of finding some means of supplying his lady's wants in a way that should not wound her pride.

“ That would be some consolation, *mais toujours j'aimerois mieux y être pour quelque chose, moi, qui lui dois tout,*” he replied.

His master told him that he should not fail of having the share in it to which he was so well entitled ; since without him he should never have been acquainted with these particulars. And the visit to the hôtel Montménil was renewed that evening with a very considerable increase of interest, and with a determination in the mind of Augustus to make an immediate communication to Sir Arthur on the subject of l'Œillet's information.

He found an addition to the society, in the person of a niece of the Countess's lately returned from emigration, to whom

he was introduced, and who immediately entered upon a catalogue of the grievances she had endured, both during emigration and since her return, so extremely pathetic as might have led to the conclusion, that all the miseries of the revolution had been accumulated on her single and devoted head. Among other circumstances, distressing enough, no doubt, she particularly dwelt upon the situation she and some of her friends found themselves in on having taken refuge in a château in Flanders, where they were surrounded by the republican army, and for weeks expecting every hour to have the château burnt over their heads, and themselves exposed to the brutality of the sans-culottes, and dragged away to Paris to the guillotine ; the enumeration of their various sufferings, terrors, and privations, and the description of their feelings in this daily expectation of death, were detailed with a *minutie* that deeply affected her aunt, who feelingly

exclaimed, "*Ah ! mon enfant, que je bénis la providence. de ne vous avoir pas abandonné dans de si terribles épreuves !—elle vous aura, sans doute, inspiré le courage de vous consoler les uns les autres.*"

"*Hélas ! oui, ma tante, nous avons fait tout ce que nous avons pu pour nous consoler :—nous avons chanté, — nous avons dansé, — joué des proverbes, — tout ce que nous avons pu imaginer de plus encourageant, enfin.*"

The tragic tone in which this was uttered, so enhanced the ludicrous import of the answer, that Augustus had the utmost difficulty to keep his countenance. Madame de Montmenil lifted up her hands and eyes, — and the Abbé ejaculated, "*Touchans préparatifs de mort ! — il faut en convenir.*"

Finding that her modes of seeking consolation in her distress, did not meet with the admiration they deserved, she soon ~~after~~ took her leave ; and then the Countess, with that easy frankness with

which the French *tout naturellement* lay open their own concerns, and enquire into yours, began informing her visitor of l'Œillet's little *ruse*, which had touched, but not surprised her, she said, because many instances of the same sort had come to her own knowledge, amidst the general depravity and ingratitude of tenants and servants, to which these terrific political convulsions had given occasion. At the same time, she could scarcely say how much his urgency and apparent disappointment, when he found her steady in refusing him, had affected her.

Augustus bore testimony to the reality of the disappointment. The Countess went on : — She supposed Thérèse had informed him that she now and then went without dinner for want of the means to purchase one ; but whenever that happened, the excellent man who had just left the room, always took care to provide something for their supper, on pretence of having gone with-

out one himself; for his mode of living was to get his morsel at some *traiteur's*, which he professed to consider as cheaper than its being dressed for him at home, though she verily believed his chief motive was to conceal from her his privations, lest she should object to letting him be at the expence of her fuel and lamp, which he chose to place on the footing of payment for the house-room she gave him. She hoped it was more from *esprit de justice* than from *fierté*, that she had refused poor l'Œillet the satisfaction she was convinced her acceptance would have given him; but she could not bring herself to it. "*C'étoit plus fort que moi*," she said, — besides that in truth the sale of her work answered very well, and it was an amusement to do it.

In proceeding to expatiate upon his merits, the Countess alluded to his devotedness to the Count her husband, who had fallen in the Prince of Condé's army, and on his death-bed recommended him

to the care of his most intimate friend the Marquis d'Hauteroche, who" ——

The sudden start, and violent flushing of Augustus, caught her attention, and interrupting herself, she eagerly enquired whether he were acquainted with any of the name?

He somewhat inarticulately replied, that a young lady, so called, was the ward of his guardian.

With great emotion, the Countess asked, "Could it possibly be Adelaide d'Hauteroche?"

"That was indeed her name?"

With a *cri de joie*, "*Ah mon Dieu! mon Dieu! — Cette chère enfant dont le sort m'a donné tant d'inquiétude!*"

A severe nervous seizure to which she was liable upon any sudden agitation, here stopped her utterance, and obliged her to have recourse to that sovereign specific for all *vapeurs*, — the *eau de fleurs d'orange*, which the porteress had by dint of importunity happily forced upon her

acceptance. This gave time for Augustus to rally and subdue his own perturbation sufficiently to satisfy her affectionate queries, the moment she was again able to articulate them. Her mind thus joyfully relieved from what had long been a source of great anxiety to her, she in her turn accounted to him for her ignorance of the fate of this beloved child of her dearest friend, by her own absence from Paris when the unfortunate Marchioness was seized and executed. A rumour had reached her of the Chevalier's escape, and knowing his fondness for his little niece, she had always endeavoured to keep alive the hope of his having rescued her at the same time, but had never found means of ascertaining any thing respecting them.

The Countess then eagerly proceeded to relate various traits of promise in the interesting girl, *« si gentille ! si attrayante ! »* The rapture with which the ear of the lover drank in her report of many an in-

stance of the generosity of affection, and the striking intelligence which had marked even the childhood of his Adelaide, does not require to be told. Nor is it more necessary to say how much these communications endeared the narrator to Augustus ; or with what warmth he imparted to Sir Arthur every circumstance that related to her.

A generous contest arose between Sir Arthur and his ward on receipt of this intelligence ; each urging their claim of becoming the benefactor to this amiable woman. — Adelaide's was certainly the strongest, from the length of friendship that had existed between her mother and the Countess, and it was acceded to. By return of post, therefore, a most affectionate letter to Madame de Montménil was despatched by Adelaide, who retained a lively impression of the indulgent kindness she had experienced from her in those very early days, inclosing a bill of exchange for one hun-



dred pounds, which she requested permission to repeat quarterly, until the counter-revolution should restore her to her own possessions,—which period was, in fact, merely alluded to, to silence Madame de Montménéil's scruples ; for although the *ci-devants* who had escaped the guillotine in France, as well as the *émigrés* in every part of Europe, supported their spirits by the positive reliance on such an event, Adelaide, who lived among the English, saw with them, that at this time no expectations were ever less founded in probability. And the incredulous astonishment with which all Europe finally beheld the wonderful occurrence, strongly marked the unlikelihood there had been in the common course of human affairs of its ever taking place.

## CHAP. XIV.

MEANWHILE Monsieur de Stanmore was as regularly looked for in the little evening *réunion* at the hôtel Montménil, as the evening came, and “*mon étourdie de nièce*,” as the countess called Madame de Blinville, increased in *her* assiduous attendance likewise, — with a view to captivate *le bel Anglois*, too obvious to be long unnoticed by one more prone than himself to interpret unspoken meanings; but Augustus had no vain conceit of his person, and his mind was filled with the image of Adelaide.

One evening, as he came to the hôtel, he was surprised on the opening of the *porte cochère*, to see the court brilliantly lighted with *reverbères* in all directions, by means of which he could

also perceive it to have lost its meadow-like appearance—an improvement to which l'Œillet directed his attention with strong demonstrations of delight. The interior, however, offered no corresponding *air de fête*, and he felt disappointed, from having admitted a momentary hope, that some satisfactory result of his statements had already made its way hither, although, in fact, it was, in point of time, impossible.

The matter was soon explained, for the Countess enquired whether he had observed the change ; and informed him that it was in consequence of her having let the first floor to a deputy of the *corps législatif*, which was the first piece of good fortune that had befallen her since the revolution, she said.

Madame de Blinville hailed the omen with rapture. “They were *nouveaux riches*—would undoubtedly give *fêtes*.—She had already been introduced to them, and it would be so very conve-

nient to make her toilet at her aunt's, and have nothing to do but ascend the staircase to the ball.

"*Comment !*" exclaimed the Countess, with very natural aristocratic feeling, "*vous pourriez vous abaisser à fréquenter ces gens-là !*"

"*Mais, mon Dieu ! Sans doute, ma tante, puisqu'on s'y amuse.—Paris est d'un triste à périr ! — et je me charge même de présenter Monsieur de Stanmore !*"

"*Et vous pourriez condescendre à vous laisser traiter de citoyenne ? — et à être tutoyée ?*"

"*Bah ! — qu'importe ? — il faut bien hurler avec les loups : — Et quant au tutoyement, la mode en est passée avec le sans-culottisme.*"

A silent, but very significant shrug of the shoulders was all her aunt's answer; to which mark of disapprobation, or indeed any other, she was not in the habit of paying much regard;—and there it rested.

The expected fête at the citoyenne Boudinot's was not long in taking place, and Madame de Blinville insisted upon the attendance of Augustus, who, in fact, had a curiosity to see the new manners, that induced him to agree with more readiness to the proposal than his *aristocrate* friend quite approved of; but he considered her as prejudiced, and did not give way to her objections.

He was instantly struck, on entering the apartments, with the *disparate* between the magnificent elegance of their fitting up, and the gaudiness of the strangely bedizened figures that occupied them, — forming so marked a contrast to the scene below stairs, where the dignified deportment of the individuals maintained their original pre-eminence, even in defiance of the wretched *déguenillé* appearance of all that surrounded them.

With that vulgar forwardness which constantly mistakes familiarity for ease,

the citoyenne Boudinot ran up to her visitors on their entrance, and laying her coarse highly-decorated hand upon Mr. Stanmore's arm, as he was named to her by his companion, exclaimed,

*“Tudieu! — Un milor Anglois! — C'est charmant! — Savez-vous, milor, que je raffole de l'Angleterre, moi? — Et que je bois tous les soirs du ponche pour être à l'Angloise; — car il n'y a, ma foi, que ça de bon! — Et puis vous avez une si belle constitution! — et de si beaux trottoirs! — et des bas de coton! — Ah délicieux! — Parlez-moi de tout ça, milor! — de grâce!”*

Augustus, with a smile, begged to inform her he was no mylord; and enquired to which of the subjects proposed she wished him to speak first.

*“Ah! c'est égal,”* she said; *“tout ce qui est Anglois me charme, moi. Si j'avois prévu la visite d'un milor, pardi! je vous aurois fait voir que je sais plus ou moins ce qu'il vous faut! — J'aurois commandé un souper, bien à l'Angloise,*

*rosbif,—petit pains chauds,—applin domp,  
—bob an squik,—puis force rasades de  
ponche.—Aha! —Vous voyez que je suis  
au fait, moi! —C'est que j'ai une amie qui  
a voyagé, qui m'a conté tout ça."*

Without giving time for any observations upon her knowledge of English manners, she went on, much to the diversion of her auditor.

*" Mais venez d'abord,—que je vous  
fasse les honneurs de mon hôtel : — et vous  
me direz si c'est ainsi qu'on meuble en  
Angleterre ; sans quoi, je ne m'en sou-  
cierois pas, moi ! — quoiqu'en dise le  
citoyen Boudinot, qui est membre du corps  
législatif, afin que vous le sachiez, — et  
qui a grondé comme un chien quand il a vu  
le mémoire de l'ébéniste. Mais je me  
moque bien de ça, moi ! — J'ai dit, Bah !  
qu'est-ce que ça fait donc, quand on est  
riche ? — Tout le monde est riche chez  
vous ! — Pas vrai, milor ? "*

During this speech she was leading him through a suite of apartments of unparalleled splendour ; the pink satin bed-cur-

tains were covered with the finest worked muslin, trimmed with the most expensive point d'Alençon; the bath and boudoir entirely lined with looking-glasses, over which fell richly embroidered silk draperies, to blind or reveal at pleasure the charms of the object they were intended to reflect; a profusion of luxuries, in short, far beyond what might formerly have gone to the fitting up of a *petite maison* for some celebrated courtesan, were here accumulated to impart *éclat* to a coarse vulgar *parvenue*, who knew no other enjoyment of money than squandering it to make herself ridiculous.

The Vicomtesse accompanied them to solace her envy of all she beheld, by exerting her talent for *persifflage* without mercy, at the expence of their conductress, who was, however, too much absorbed in her own consequence to perceive the drift of her observations; but Augustus could with difficulty restrain his risible muscles when Madame de Blin-



ville, remarked upon the gratification attending her *réveil*, to behold herself in the mirror that filled the pannel against which the bed was placed, “surrounded as she must there appear by the loves and the graces,” (a cupid was placed at the *chevet*, holding the Grecian night-lamp, and a Hebe at the foot, offering the cruise of perfumed oil with which to fill it,) the idea of the citoyenne’s grotesque person, so attended, was almost too much for any man’s politeness to withstand.

“*Ah ça, dites-moi franchement votre avis, milor !—car, ma foi, pour peu que ce ne fût pas bien à l’Angloise, ce seroit à refaire ! arrive qui peut ! le citoyen auroit beau pester ! ce n’est pas là ce qui m’arrêteroît, pardi !*”

He simply made answer, that the English had not yet adopted the fashion of including the sleeping-rooms in the suite of the apartments for company.

“*Aha ! oui, à-propos ;—je me souviens*

*d'avoir entendu dire ça, et que c'est à cause que vos femmes sont prudes; — pas vrai, milor? Je n'aime pas la pruderie, moi; — c'est d'un bien mauvais ton, — et d'une maussaderie insupportable, d'ailleurs. Pardi, je leur dirai ça à vos dames, quand le premier Consul pourra se passer du citoyen Boudinot, et que les soins de l'état lui permettront une petite absence pour s'emmener en Angleterre."*

The Citizen Boudinot now made his appearance, — exhibiting in his dark, short, spare, sharp, ferocious-looking person a curious contrast to his *grosse réjouie* of a wife, — but assuming all the consequential air that he conceived becoming the dignity of a *député*. His origin was from the foundling-hospital, and his first trade a vender of pork and black puddings, whence the name of Boudin had been conferred upon him, and for want of a better, he had been fain to answer to it.

But fortunate circumstances in the revolution opened higher prospects to him ;

at first an active *sans-culotte*, he had then gained admittance to the Jacobin club as a furious orator, and thence to the revolutionary tribunal, where he had signalized his zeal by discovering, denouncing, and condemning to the guillotine such aristocrats as had any property left. This had obtained him the notice and goodwill of Robespierre, and his services had been rewarded by shares of plunder, to the amount that supplied his lady's present profusion. She had been the wife of a *concièrge* of one of the châteaux burnt by Boudin during his military career, and her husband being murdered in the onset, had recompensed the valour of the leader, not only by betraying the concealed property of her master, but with her precious hand ; only stipulating as a preliminary condition the improvement, of an additional syllable to his name, by which it was ennobled into Boudinot. On Bonaparte's rising into power, she had found means to influence

the district she had before lived in, and get him chosen deputy. Finally, as the consummation of their greatness, she had persuaded him to engage and furnish the stately apartments they now inhabited; which were indebted for their splendour to the taste of the *ébéniste*, to whom *carte blanche* had been given in point of expense.

She no sooner perceived the important personage, than guiding Stanmore, on whose arm she continued to lean, towards him, she vociferated, "*Aha! te voilà, citoyen! — Viens! que je te présente un Milor! — il pourra te mettre au fait de tout ce que tu peux encore ignorer de la constitution Anglaise!*"

"*J'ose croire, citoyenne!*" he replied, with a very disdainful look; "*qu'ignorer n'est pas précisément le terme propre — nous n'ignorons rien ici de ce qui regarde tout ça. — Je serai au contraire bien aise d'apprendre à Milor, que nous sommes en train, le citoyen premier Consul et moi, de*

*renchérir sur la perfection de cette constitution si vantée."*

Augustus, vastly too much amused to think of giving any serious answer to this rhodomontade, with an air of ludicrous deference, said, " France had been so fertile of instruction to the world of late years, that it would certainly be desirable England should learn wisdom from her example."

In the true spirit of his nation, the citizen construed this into a compliment, and condescendingly replied, "*Ah pardi! c'est aussi par trop modeste ! — car il faut convenir que vous autres Anglois, vous avez, par ci par là, fait d'assez belles choses ! — mais je dois pourtant vous observer que vous avez des coutumes bien bizarres."*

" What might those be to which he alluded ?"

" *Mais, par exemple, cette manière d'aller s'asseoir par douzaines sur un mort, pour le préparer à l'enterrement !\* Vous*

\* The Coroner's Inquest 'sitting on the Body.'

*m'avouerez que ça n'a pas le sens commun ! Sacré bleu ! si on avoit imaginé un tel accessoire aux œuvres de la guillotine, plus d'un aristocrate y eût trouvé son compte !— le temps auroit, pardieu ! manqué à la besogne !”* with a ferocious laugh.

At this moment, perceiving one of his colleagues, he walked suddenly off to receive him, saving Augustus the trouble of an answer, which, between diversion at his ignorance, and disgust at his brutal *plaisanterie*, he had for an instant hesitated to make.

The dancing soon began, and in the intervals of rest, Mde. de Blinville amused herself in leading their hostess into the details of her own consequence, and her husband's possessions, which she was ever ready to dilate on. In the course of her communications, the name of citizen Boudinot's *terre* was mentioned ; the Vicomtesse, with a scream of horror, exclaimed, “ *Juste Ciel ! le château de ces infortunés d'Hauteroches !”*

In fact, the very residence of Adelaide's parents was that which Boudin had taken the lead in erasing, and been rewarded with the property for his pains. Mde. de Blinville, on making this discovery, fancied she recognized some of the Marchioness's jewels in the decorations of the odious person before her ; not even *her* levity could stand this, and she instantly complied with the proposal of the indignant Augustus, to quit the company without delay.

The following morning brought the eagerly looked-for despatches from England. Aware of their contents, by Sir Arthur's communication to himself, Stanmore was desirous of gratifying l'Œillet's attachment to the family, by making him the bearer of the good tidings which he was sure the Countess would take a pleasure in imparting ; so telling him there was no hurry for his return, as the letters he had to write would keep him at home

the whole morning, he sent off his servant to be made happy.

And happy enough he certainly was made; the poor fellow's raptures, when he came back, seemed almost to turn his brain — he could find no expressions for them. He threw himself at his master's feet — he began praying for blessings on his head, in terms so incoherent, that it was long ere any sense could be made of what he said. At length it appeared that Madame had no sooner read her letter, than she enquired whether l'Œillet was still there, and ordered him, as well as Thérèse and the porteress, into her presence, and with tears of joy in her eyes, “ *Oui, Monsieur, des larmes de bonheur! — à coup sûr, les premières de ce genre que Madame ait versée depuis bien des années — et c'est à vous, Monsieur, qu'elle les doit — que le ciel vous comble des ses bénédictions!* ” and then she told them, he went on, that that blessed Mlle. d'Hauteroche had made her richer than she could de-



sire, and had given her the power of rewarding our fidelity ; — “ but we wanted no reward, and only fell on our knees to thank the Holy Virgin, though we could not speak — and then she said, Go and compose yourselves, *mes enfans* ; — for she always speaks so graciously to those about her — and then she bid me tell my master, that she should not recover tranquillity of mind till she had expressed her gratitude to you ; — but she was too much agitated then. — But now, Sir, I have a thousand pardons to ask — for indeed I could not help imploring Madame to take me back into her service, now she could again afford it ; — and she said she meant to recommend me to you, because wages were so much better in England ; — but I hope you won't think me ungrateful for your goodness ; — I never could be happy if she took another servant instead of me, and so I told her.”

“ You are perfectly right,” said his

master, "and it will be a matter of true satisfaction to me to restore so attached a servant to so excellent a mistress."

"Monsieur was by so much *trop bon* that he knew not how to thank him enough, but he should pray morning and night to the Virgin to recompense him; and, with his permission, would go *de ce pas*, and reinstate himself at the Hôtel Montménil."

"I certainly shall not wish to delay your return there long," replied the master, good humouredly; "but it would be rather convenient to me to be provided with a substitute for you first."

"*Ah, mon Dieu! sans doute.*" He again asked pardon for his *étourderie*; "his happiness had put this quite out of his head, but he knew of an excellent one, and would go in quest of him forthwith;" which he did, and when Augustus paid his evening visit, he was admitted and announced by l'Œillet with an air and look of exultation, as he cast

an appealing glance towards the better lighted apartments, that rejoiced his master's kind heart.

It was no small sacrifice he had made to the gratification of l'Œillet, in forbearing to indulge himself by witnessing the satisfaction to which Adelaide's letter would give rise. The brightening gloss of gratitude however still spoke in Madame de Montménil's charming countenance, and the beloved of his heart furnished the delightful theme for the evening, till the arrival of Madame de Blinville turned the conversation to her discovery of the preceding night, which she imparted with all the energy of horror it could inspire. Even her aunt's better regulated feelings were not proof against the shock of finding herself under the same roof with the very wretches who had so actively contributed to the ruin of her friend, and that friend the mother of Adelaide, to whom she was at this instant so greatly indebted. She

vehemently declared, that had it come to her knowledge earlier in the day, she would have left the hôtel on the moment, and taken refuge in the poorest *taudis* she might have met with, till a suitable apartment should be found.

Stanmore now imparted a letter from his guardian to himself; laying claim, on the score of old friendship, to the right of replacing some of the former comforts of the Hôtel Montménéil in point of furniture, and commissioning his ward to provide them to any extent.

“*C'en est, en vérité, trop!*” exclaimed the Countess, overpowered by her feelings, and weeping like a child; the delicacy that marked these proceedings striking still more forcibly on her heart than the generosity of them. It was not without difficulty she was brought to consent to this claim of Sir Arthur's, and when she at length gave way to the arguments urged, the plan was changed from refurnishing the abode, which she

could now no longer endure, to the fitting up some néat apartments better suited to her and the Abbé's present situation ; in quest of which he and Augustus appointed to sally forth together on the following morning.

This matter was speedily accomplished to their satisfaction. They found a commodious *entresol*, in an airy quarter, exactly calculated to suit the Countess and the Abbé, and Augustus lost no time in obeying Sir Arthur's injunctions, by furnishing it in the handsomest and most comfortable manner, — reserving to himself, however, the pleasure of supplying all the ornamental nicknacks of *pendules*, *porcelaines*, &c. which are considered as necessary to complete a perfectly elegant apartment.

Madame de Montménil had no peace till she took possession of it, her own ~~hotel~~ giving her now no other idea than that of a *repaire* for incendiaries and assassins. L'Œillet alone bestowed sighs

and parting regrets on the tattered remains of former greatness they were quitting, which however *délabré* now, he said, attested what once had been his pride and admiration. Still greater was his mortification, when he found the successor to these *rez-de-chaussée* apartments was a *marchand de modes*, who there displayed his ribbons and frippery, to be reflected by mirrors reaching from ceiling to floor, in rooms opening with glass-doors into a garden, where orange-trees and oleanders still flourished in defiance of chance and change.\*

The Abbé confessed he had taken a *plaisir malin*, in admitting such a tenant, to humble the ostentatious arrogance of the unworthies above, who had signified their desire to occupy the whole, when they found *ces pauvres gueux d'aristocrates* were leaving it. The Countess did not quite approve of this little piece

\* An exact description of the Magasin des Modes, of Le Roi, the most fashionable milliner in 1802.

of revenge, which she thought inconsistent with the Abbé's profession and general character ; but he had been so much provoked to find who they were whom he had so unadvisedly put in possession of the apartments, that he was not himself upon this occasion. She remonstrated forcibly also with Augustus, against the profusion with which he was decorating her pretty dwelling, but he would not be checked ; and she at length submitted, in the full persuasion that the counter-revolution, to which they all so constantly looked, would reinstate her in her property, and enable her to acquit the debt she was contracting.

A regular and most affectionate correspondence was now established between her and Adelaide, in which the merits of *ce cher Auguste* were very fully expatiated on by Madame de Montménil, and seldom failed of obtaining some obliging expression of esteem in return.

Such expressions, however slight or accidental, duly imparted to the youthful lover, and always with some flattering comment, arising from the very natural conclusion, in the mind of the Countess, that these young people were destined for one another, took powerful hold upon his mind, and hopes the most inimical to his peace were thus renewed and fostered.

With such attractions for his strongest feelings, the society of the Countess became all in all to Augustus; and the very idea of proceeding on his travels to Italy, suggested by Sir Arthur on his first arrival at Paris, was obliterated from his thoughts, except when recalled by some urgent letter of his guardian, to whom his stay appeared unreasonably and injuriously prolonged. These remonstrances he had hitherto evaded as well as he could; professing only to defer the intention till he should have accomplished a task which he had



undertaken, in the hope of gratifying Adelaide, and in which he was making rapid progress. This was to take reduced sketches of the most remarkable pictures which then enriched the Louvre, which he did with a power of pencil, and energy of outline, that might have emulated Flaxman's beautiful illustrations of Homer ; thus forming a collection he had good reason for conceiving might be an offering worthy of Adelaide herself, an elegant proficient in the art.

He was, at length, roused into activity by a letter from England ; but it was to retrace his steps thither with all speed, instead of pursuing his continental tour. The letter was not designed for his inspection, being indited by a tender-hearted damsel in the Delmaine family, to her lover, Thomas, Mr. Stanmore's man : having remained long in the pocket of an acquaintance, who had undertaken to convey it in the course of his travels to its

destination, it had finally found its way, some months after date.

It stated, at great length, though with sufficient unintelligibility, that some dreadful accident had befallen Adelaide; but the extent of it, or the manner in which it had occurred, was not easy to ascertain. It appeared, indeed, 'that Mr. Peer had put out Miss Addlehead's eye, 'poor dear! — only she looked so pretty 'and so good-natured about it, as if she 'never minded nothing about the matter; 'thof she had, sure enough, like to have 'died on't.' A most incomprehensible account of the accident followed, and of master's having 'took on like one 'beside himself, to be sure,' and was 'never away from her chamber-door, 'and got in when nobody see him : ' then a long detail of the gossipings in the housekeeper's room, ending with — 'only my lady thought no harm, 'as she never did of nobody; but mas- 'ter had never been his own man since,

‘and would’nt let Mr. Peer come into his sight, till Miss Addlehead spoke for him, and made him more fonder of him than before.’

However accustomed to Betty’s confused manner of delivering her ideas, Thomas could neither make head nor tail of all this ; nevertheless as it was evident something distressing had happened to Mademoiselle d’Hauteroche, he without scruple put the letter into his master’s hand, notwithstanding the tender effusions to himself with which the narrative was interspersed.

The consternation of Augustus cannot well be described : — tortured with contending emotions, — one moment, all terror for the consequences of an accident he could not comprehend, and the next a prey to jealousy from the extraordinary representations of the conduct of his guardian, — he suddenly resolved on an instantaneous return, to satisfy himself upon both heads. In fact, the intima-

tions given in the letter respecting Sir Arthur appeared to him merely in the light of confirmation of a secret mistrust, which had for some time been gaining ground on his mind, of sentiments, on his guardian's part, towards Adelaide, which could not be avowed. On what his suspicions rested he was scarce able exactly to tell: the instinct of jealousy is not easily defined. He had been struck with a change in his mode of expression in speaking of her, which probably proceeded from excess of caution not to betray himself. There was at one time such a reserve, when obliged to allude to her, and at another such an unexpected and apparently unintentional recurrence to her in the same letter,—that would have passed unobserved to any but the eye of a passionate rejected lover, who easily recognized the signs of her image being ever present to the writer's mind. The singularity, too, of having let this alarming event, whatever it might be, reach him

in this strange accidental manner, — the various insinuations contained in the prolix inexplicable epistle, — all combined to set his brain on fire ; — and ordering horses without delay, he only gave himself time to write an incoherent account of his alarm and determination to the Countess, and set off with all speed.

Madame de Montménil was confounded at this precipitate departure, and took her full share of alarm at the cause. Madame de Blinville was of course *au désespoir*. — In which state they must both for the present be left, while we make ourselves acquainted with the result of Augustus's impetuous proceedings. — Though it will be necessary previously to advert to some occurrences which had taken place at Hawkwood Manor since the communications made by Mrs. Betty.

## CHAP. XV.

LADY Samford's second visit seemed of better promise for realizing the General's wish than the first had been, as far as she was concerned at least. A circumstance had occurred that made a female inmate rather desirable to her Ladyship, as affording the most natural means of screening her from the censures, there was some danger might be excited, by the arrival of an intimate friend from the Continent.

This was a German baron Lady Samford had met with at Lisbon, who had kindly taken upon himself to supply the place of the friend she had left behind, as well as the part of comforter for the

loss of her “poor dear Samford,” as she pathetically called him. She had resisted his proposal of attending her to England, as a somewhat too glaring breach of decorum, having just enough of respect for the world’s good opinion, to guard against its throwing her off altogether, now that she was deprived of the natural protector of her reputation, her blindly indulgent husband. She had therefore made a point of the Baron’s returning to Paris, where he had originally improved his morals and political opinions during the reign of Robespierre, and where he would be at hand to obey her summons, whenever she should have secured a female companion to give some sanction to the admission of a male visitor. For this purpose she had selected an indigent accommodating elderly relation ; whom she had not, however, found so disengaged as to be immediately able to obey her call. Meanwhile, her friend’s tender impatience having anticipated the prescribed time for his

visit, it became of importance to comply with her uncle's plan respecting Adelaide. With the powers of pleasing which she really possessed,—for her manners, when she chose, were very insinuating,—there could be little doubt of her making rapid progress in Adelaide's good liking, whenever she fairly set about it, and as little fear of *her* seeing more than it was meant she should in the Baron's sentimental friendship. Perfectly honest and innocent in her own intentions, she was very easily deceived by Lady Samford's plausibility, and an intimacy the most injurious to her already unsettled mind speedily took place. Confidential communications ensued; made in true simplicity of heart on one side, and the most complete duplicity on the other—for her Ladyship was under no delusion:—Experience had taught her lessons well calculated, if she had so pleased, to open the poor girl's eyes, who was rushing on headlong to inevitable misery.



But when, towards the close of her stay at Hawkwood Manor, Lady Samford made the proposal of taking her new friend with her for a time to Samford Lodge, Adelaide declined the invitation in the most positive terms. Vain as various were the arguments adduced to conquer her reluctance : she was ready to give any proof of friendship, save that of quitting her guardian's roof even for a day.

“ Suffering as you are under the chilling reserve he assumes,” said Lady Samford, “ depend upon it, your absence would be the very means of drawing forth those feelings he evidently is at so much pains to repress.”

“ O that I could but be sure the feelings existed!” exclaimed Adelaide ; “ I would hug the dear conviction to my heart, and cherish it the more fondly for being concealed from all the world besides : it is not the vain boast of being

honoured with sentiments so distinguished I seek."

"No, assuredly," replied her friend; "I give you credit for sense somewhat superior to that: the boast might be liable to misconstruction; the world is not sufficiently virtuous to do justice to exalted sentiments. — 'While we are at Rome we must do as they do at Rome.'"

"Did I misunderstand you, then, the other day, when you seemed to inculcate a contrary doctrine, and make our own conscience the only umpire of our actions? — You quoted the Italian adage, you know — *Paga lui, paga il mondo.*"

Lady Samford's cause being none of the best in the world, the arguments by which it was supported were not always found to be in harmony with one another.

"Why — no" — (with some hesitation) "you did not exactly misunderstand; but it should not be taken so entirely, *au pied de la lettre.* Circumstances may

require an occasional deviation from a general plan of conduct : — judgment must be the guide in that as in every thing else.”

“ And yet,” contended Adelaide, “ if ever it can be allowable to run counter to received opinions, it must be when conscious integrity and purity of thought are so obvious as to convince the world of the innocence of the sentiment, and set it an example of mental superiority.”

“ For which it would hate and little thank you,” interrupted her Ladyship. “ No, no, my dear, the era of liberal sentiment has not yet dawned upon England ! John Bull will still go on in the beaten track, and believe no passion admissible but what is to lead to vulgar matrimony. All this, however, is nothing to the purpose ; what I want to impress upon you is, that losing you from under his roof is the very thing that will draw Sir Arthur into a display of the cor-

responding feelings so necessary to your happiness."

"But if it is his purpose to conceal them, I would never forgive myself for causing him to betray them. — Let me but be sure of their existence, and I ask no more of fate."

"How wildly romantic!" cried Lady Samford, whose aim and ideas were as short of the simple honesty of poor Adelaide, as she was careless of the possible consequences of what it just now suited her so strenuously to urge. She urged, however, in vain — Adelaide was immovable.

When the General was informed of his niece's failure, he thought it advisable to take a different method for attaining his object, trusting that an attack made in full conclave might find abettors Adelaide could not so easily resist; and here he was not mistaken, although the readiness with which his suit was seconded did not

appear exactly in the quarter he expected.

When the placing of the dessert had given occasion for the servants to withdraw, he appealed to Lady Delmaine for her influence with Mademoiselle d'Hauteroche, to indulge Lady Samford in the pleasure she so anxiously desired.

Lady Delmaine quietly replied, she should throw no impediment in the way, if Adelaide wished it ; but she must decide for herself.

Before Adelaide could repeat the negative that was rising to her lips, Sir Arthur interposed to give his unqualified assent to the proposal, in a tone of such unusual decision, as seemed to leave her no option but to comply.

Confounded, as well as heart-struck with this apparent eagerness to send her from him, she became incapable of utterance : her emotion was too powerful to be effectually concealed by the struggle she made to say something ; her lips

moved, but no sound issued from them ; and the sort of half bow directed to the General might or might not indicate assent. But the well-meaning old man, gratified with a support of his plan which he construed into what it certainly was, a proof of rectitude of intention, and wishing to push his advantage so far, as to preclude all possibility of retracting, seized her hand, saying, “ Now, my dear young lady, there cannot remain a shadow of objection on your part : — The will of a guardian is law, you know.”

Adelaide was silent.

With an air of pique, Lady Samford said, “ I must confess my satisfaction in the visit will be considerably allayed, by owing to mere obedience what I had hoped good will might have prompted.”

“ O! Lady Samford, spare me,” cried Adelaide ; and tears were fast gathering, in spite of her attempt to disperse them.

Julia, who had hitherto been a silent participator in her friend's distress, now

feelingly observed, " Indeed, Lady Samford, *we* should have had cause for mortification, if Adelaide had been so ready as you seem to have expected, to give us all up for claims so much more recent than ours to her society. I'm sure *I* shall feel quite lost."

" Thank you, Julia !" interrupted Charlotte ; " a sister can hope to make you no amends."

" Dearest Charlotte ! how very unjust you are !" replied Julia, whose tears were ready to flow likewise.

" I had no idea," said Lady Samford, " that my very natural wish for a *short* visit" (with an emphasis on the word short) " would have produced so much distress, or I should not have been so selfish as to urge it ; and even now am half tempted to retract."

" So like yourself, my dear !" cried the General ; " ever willing to forego your own pleasure. But I am to come in for my share of this, and am not so disinter-

ested as to incline to relinquish it, particularly as it is sanctioned by my good friend here."

"I am satisfied," rejoined Sir Arthur, "that Adelaide's apparent reluctance has only arisen from consideration for Lady Delmaine and myself; — and that being assured we both concur in readiness to spare her for a *short* time, she will no longer hesitate to avail herself of the obliging proposal."

She saw the die was cast, and that she could not avoid acquiescence; so, with a miserable attempt at a smile, she faintly uttered "You are all too good." And Lady Delmaine soon after rising from table, gave her the opportunity of making her escape to her own room, where a flood of tears relieved her oppressed heart. The word *short*, reiterated by her guardian, a little assuaged the bitterness of her feelings.

The business was now arranged without farther difficulty or discussion. Ade-



laide was too well bred to manifest un-availing reluctance ; and to account for Sir Arthur's readiness to place his ward in such hands, it must be observed, that his late habitual estrangement from his family-circle had deprived him of the means of discovering how very short Lady Samford fell of the testimony borne to her merits by her partial uncle. Anxious to strengthen his own self-denying purpose, he had caught at the idea of this temporary absence, as well calculated to give him time to breathe a little from the continual pressure upon his thoughts, and to weigh more calmly and freely the possibility of adopting some plan for the protection of them both.

Lady Samford, perfectly satisfied to have carried her point. fixed the day of her departure without delay or opposition. To Julia only did Adelaide impart the distracted state of her mind, wounded almost beyond endurance at this proof, as she deemed it, of her guard-

ian's indifference. Grieved to the greatest degree at the unhappiness of her friend, Julia knew not what to think, or what to say. The change in her father's habits and conduct was too marked to be the result of chance : it must have some powerful motive ! If that motive were disapprobation of the so openly avowed predilection of Adelaide, then she could not but fear that what he condemned must be wrong ; and she recurred to the promise of open heartedness given to Lady Delmaine : but Adelaide would not allow she had any thing to impart ; probably not foreseeing much chance of consolation in her present distress from any such communication.

When the morning appointed for their departure came, a kind message was repeated by the General from Sir Arthur, expressive of his regret that an unavoidable call of business had obliged him to set out at an early hour, and prevented his bidding them a personal farewell.

Adelaide, who had been summoning all her pride to her aid in subduing the emotion she expected to feel at parting, was so completely upset by this last aggravation — for she conceived it to be, as it actually was, a mere pretence — that she burst into the most ungovernable passion of tears. Fortunately, none were present but those already too well aware of the state of her feelings ; only Lady Delmaine and Julia having attended the early breakfast that had been ordered, to speed their setting off.

“ O, Julia ! ” whispered the weeping girl, as she clung to her friend in a parting embrace, “ could you have imagined unkindness equal to this ? ”

“ I can never believe unkindness to be the motive,” was the reply. “ Dear, dear girl, be comforted ! — and rely upon some satisfactory explanation : I feel sure you will hear from him.”

A mournful shake of the head was the only answer, and they parted.

Honour had done for Sir Arthur all that honour singly is competent to do — It had enabled him to make the sacrifice by which he had devoted himself, as well as the object of his ardent affection, to unqualified misery, lest the world should misunderstand and condemn the intercourse he at times was inclined to believe (ah ! how erroneously !) might have been innocently indulged in, but for the dread of this severe censor. But what was there now to support him under the cruel privation he had imposed upon himself? — not even the vain gratification of worldly applause : — his self-denial must be confined to his own bosom. Virtue is said to be its own reward — most true : — but it must be virtue emanating from another source than mere respect for the opinion of others. Virtue, dictated by a profound sense of duty, will indeed reward the self-denial it requires, by the consciousness of its high and pure motives. Habitual reference to that all-

seeing eye, which does not overlook even our virtuous *imaginings*, should circumstances thwart their rising into actions, will support the mind, that can look for *no other approbation, through the sacrifices to which it condemns itself* : — but this perception — this reference — were not Sir Arthur's. *He* had obeyed the dictates of honour alone, and rapidly sunk deep in unmitigated gloom and despondency, that spread itself to all around, notwithstanding his every effort to confine it to his own breast.

## CHAP. XVI.

MEANWHILE the wretched Adelaide had arrived at Samford Lodge. Lady Samford said every pretty thing, and the General did every kind one, that either could think of, to cheer their pensive guest — but she was not to be cheered.

The General's friendly endeavours were, however, soon interrupted by a summons to the assistance of a brother officer, who was involved in a difficulty that called not only for his advice, but for his presence, and he left the Lodge at a few hours' notice. Very opportunely for his niece, who had not laid her account with his lengthened stay, and was revolving some scheme to put an end to his visit, before the arrival of her continental friend : — this interesting person having

adopted a freedom of manner in the attentions he paid her, more congenial to German than English ideas, and which would require a little subduing, before they were likely to be tolerated, by so rigid a disciple of the old school as the worthy veteran. From the observation of Adelaide she had not much to apprehend ; so absorbed in her own feelings, she would pay little regard to what was passing around, or if an inadvertence should occur that might happen to strike her, the enthusiasm of her vivid imagination made her liable to be easily misled by any interpretation with which her Ladyship should see fit to gloss it over.

Seasonable indeed was the General's departure, for on the evening of the same day, Baron Hildesheim arrived. The Baron's appearance was not prepossessing — a superstructure of the new Parisian philosophical slovenliness, raised upon a foundation of German perpendi-

cularity, did not strike Adelaide as a very happy combination, set off as it was withal by no inconsiderable share of conceit. — She could not forbear testifying her surprise to Lady Samford, when called upon for her opinion, at an exterior so different from her expectation.

“ Exterior ! ” — repeated her Ladyship, “ Heavens, Adelaide ! — could I have anticipated such a remark from an adept in the refined and sublimated sentiments of soul uniting with soul ? — Exterior, indeed ! — away with such grovelling ideas ! — strangely short do you fall of the true system of Plato, if you lay any stress upon personal attractions ! ”

Adelaide stood abashed before this pure disciple of the Platonic school, for she could not but acknowledge to herself that the advantages of Sir Arthur's personal appearance had made a deep impression in his favour, before she had taken time to appreciate his mental perfections.

“ Not but what,” continued her



monitress, in a tone of pique, “ I should deem any body unaccountably fastidious who denied the Baron’s beauty of form to be at least commensurate to his intellectual pre-eminence : — Where’ will you find a more striking symmetry of person ? — a more brilliant complexion ? — a more regular set of features ? — I only mean to say,” checking the warmth she was giving way to, “ that to those who might be inclined to value what I profess to set at naught, my friend’s pretensions would rank pretty high.”

“ I must confess I did not pay such critical attention to his personal claims to admiration : — I spoke only from the first impression his manners gave me of his mind, which was what I thought your enquiry tended to,” returned Adelaide, rather struck with her eager eulogium of what she disclaimed to prize.

Lady Stamford was sensible of a something in the tone of this reply that warned her against letting her displeasure

at the disparagement of the Baron's perfections, get the better of her prudence, and she judiciously turned off a conversation which was in danger of betraying more than she intended, and which was thus soon obliterated from Adelaide's sad thoughts.

The eagerly looked-for post hour brought with it a daily disappointment, although Julia was faithful to her promised exactness of correspondence; but of her father she had only to say, that they saw little of him, and when they did, he seemed grave, abstracted, and apparently unwell, but did not chuse to allow that he was so.

With the usual inconsistency of ill-regulated feelings, Adelaide alternately grieved over and rejoiced at this report.

"See you not clearly," said Lady Samford, to whom she uttered every agitated thought as it arose, "see you not clearly that

"Love is the cause of his mourning?"

And what can you wish for beyond this conviction? — Do but endeavour to be calm till Pierre shall arrive, and never trust me more if he bring not some elucidation.”

Pierre had remained behind to bring with him various little unfinished matters, and been delayed beyond expectation ; his final appearance was hailed with feelings too intense for expression, when he presented himself with a letter in his hand ; which, at the first distant glance, his lady recognised to be from her guardian.

She flew with it to her own apartment, and, locking herself in, attempted to break the seal, but so extreme was her emotion, many minutes elapsed ere she could accomplish even this necessary step towards the investigation of its contents ; and when she at length succeeded, — at the expence of a tear in the paper, which seemed to make a rent in her heart, so much she feared the obliteration of a single syllable, — a tremor took possession

of her frame, which caused the letters to dance before her sight in a degree that made it quite impossible to take in their sense. Alternately covering the paper with kisses, and weeping with vexation at the effects of her uncontrollable agitation, a considerable space of time elapsed ere she could sufficiently subdue herself for any comprehension of what she read ; during which, Lady Samford's impatience for the gratification of her curiosity, rose to a height, that finally compelled her to seek its relief, by enquiring into what her companion seemed so dilatory in imparting.

The locked door was an unexpected impediment to her eagerness ; and, in return to her repeated application for admittance, she only heard inarticulate sobs, without any signs of an intention of opening it. Recollecting another entrance into the room, through a closet that communicated with her boudoir, which was kept locked on her own side,

she speedily had recourse to that, and, on entering, found the poor girl in strong hysterics, the distressing letter crumpled up, and convulsively grasped in her hand, with a strength that baffled the attempt to disengage it; —or Lady Samford's delicacy would have been no bar to her immediate acquaintance with its information. As it was, she was obliged to curb her impatience till she had summoned the necessary assistance.

It was very long ere the means usual on such occasions produced effect; and when they did, she only recovered to a state of miserable exhaustion, sighs, and tears, accompanied with ejaculations of — “Why could I not die? — Cruel to bring me back to life!” —

“For heaven's sake do explain the cause of all this agony! — What has occurred?” —cried Lady Samford, with more of peevishness than of tenderness in her voice.

“Wretched outcast that I am! — driven

from my guardian's house and protection !  
— Oh read — read the cruel mandate !”

Lady Samford read as follows : —

‘ In obeying the imperious dictates of  
‘ honour by sending you from me, I have  
‘ sealed my own doom ; but I have also  
‘ fulfilled the sacred trust for which I had  
‘ engaged, of guarding you against my-  
‘ self.

‘ Too well am I aware of the pain I  
‘ have inflicted by this means on the object  
‘ of my tenderest solicitude ; but I could  
‘ not trust my own resolution in an expla-  
‘ natory interview, and was therefore con-  
‘ strained to leave you to the probable  
‘ impression of an unfeeling harshness on  
‘ my part of which I am totally incapable.  
‘ Unfeeling ! — Adelaide ! you could not  
‘ believe it, if you but for one moment  
‘ recollect — what, however, I must not  
‘ suffer myself to retrace ; — but could the  
‘ shedding of my heart's blood redeem the  
‘ anguish you are enduring, how freely  
‘ should it flow ! — It is to a severer sacri-

‘ fice I am compelled — I must drag on  
‘ my wretched existence, separated for a  
‘ considerable period of time from all that  
‘ can give value to life.

‘ Such is the stern decree imposed by  
‘ honour — of which the innocent purity  
‘ of your heart will scarcely allow you to  
‘ feel the dire necessity; nor can I say  
‘ more upon the subject, than that I am  
‘ but too conscious of its urgency, and  
‘ consequently must beseech you, in the  
‘ most strenuous manner, to concur with  
‘ me in seeking every pretext for prolong-  
‘ ing your present visit; and when you can  
‘ no longer delay your return, I will find  
‘ some plea for absenting myself till I may  
‘ be able to recover the firmness, which I  
‘ now fatally find it absolutely requisite  
‘ I should possess, before I may indulge in  
‘ the dangerous delight of again constantly  
‘ beholding a being, formed in every way  
‘ of nature’s choicest, best’—

‘ Do not, my most beloved ward, at-  
‘ tempt to gainsay my determination; it

‘ would be in vain. Had I no other mo-  
 ‘ tive but to screen your fair fame from  
 ‘ the misapprehensions of an uncharitable  
 ‘ world, it would be reason sufficient for  
 ‘ steady adherence to my purpose; but  
 ‘ there is infinitely more at stake, and the  
 ‘ full conviction of this gives me strength  
 ‘ for the part I am taking. It is the deep-  
 ‘ est and most disinterested concern for  
 ‘ my Adelaide’s happiness which enables  
 ‘ me to tear myself from the witchery of  
 ‘ Adelaide’s presence. But if you knew  
 ‘ what it cost me! — O heavens! may  
 ‘ you ever be ignorant of such exquisite  
 ‘ torture as I at this heart-rending instant  
 ‘ endure! — Farewell.’

“ Why, good God, Adelaide, you must  
 be out of your senses!” she exclaimed  
 when she had done, “ to distress yourself  
 in this manner for the very proof of love  
 you have been so anxious to obtain, and  
 which I rightly predicted your separation  
 would draw forth! — Does it not breathe  
 in every line?”



“ Can Love inspire harshness ? — does he not drive me from him ? — O no, no ! too well do I feel the difference. I would hang upon his accents — upon his looks — for ever. Love does not cast its object from it—love draws towards itself — O how fondly !— Might I but exist in his loved presence. — Always lie down at night sure to see him again in the morning, — and the next, — and the next, — for ever ! — I would ask no more of Fate. — And who should grudge me this ? — whom could I injure ? — I am not an intriguing creature, wishing to seduce him to do a wrong action, Lady Samford ; but he believes I am, and therefore drives me from him. — O merciful Heaven, that thought kills me ! ” — And a fresh agony of tears choked her utterance. .

Even the heartless Lady Samford was touched with these genuine effusions of artless affection, and endeavoured to soothe her in every way she could devise.

She pointed out the marked expressions so clearly testifying that it was *himself*, not *her*, he distrusted; and what could give stronger proof of his sentiments being all that she could wish them?

But Adelaide was not in a state to attend to any thing beside the unhappy impression she had received of his bad opinion of her, and of being an isolated, wretched outcast. — “*He* doubtful of himself!” she cried; — “*he* do wrong! — Can perfection err? — and who was ever so perfect! — No, no; ’tis *me* he doubts — I am not to be deceived. — Oh that I should have lived to see the day that I should be suspected of worthless intentions!” And again a gush of tears almost suffocated her.

Lady Samford saw no use in persisting to argue with her for the present; but having succeeded in making her take some composing drops, left her to the effects of them, in the expectation of finding her more rational at her return.

Incredible as it may seem, from what has been said of the unfortunate selection of reading to which Adelaide had been devoted, it is nevertheless true, that the perfect innocence of her mind had proved the shield of its purity. Trained in complete unacquaintedness with ill by the nuns of the convent in which her uncle had placed her, the system was approved and seconded by her English friends at Florence, and even acquiesced in by the free-thinking Chevalier, from a curiosity to ascertain how far perfect ignorance might prove an efficient preservative against the dangers of the passions. She thus retained a simplicity of mind and innocent unconsciousness on the subject of human vice, which formed a singular contrast to her information on most others ; of which a single instance of *naïveté* may serve as no unamusing specimen.

Passing with her friend through a room where the Chevalier had been reading,

a book was left on the table, which Mrs. Oldham took up, and immediately canted to the top of a very high set of drawers, saying, "I wish the Chevalier would be more careful of leaving these abominable bad books about, as he does."

"Oh dear!" said Adelaide, "I am so sorry you have thrown it out of reach! for I should have liked just to see what a bad book is about."

She was at that time fifteen! In the various course of her subsequent strange readings, her eyes had certainly glanced over many an informing page; but instinctive modesty shrunk from seeking to understand what struck her to be immoral or indelicate: — and thus, perhaps, the very purity of her soul might serve, in this instance, to cherish that unfortunate fearlessness we have remarked in her, of the dangers to which her impetuous and enthusiastic feelings exposed her.

After the lapse of some hours, Lady Samford again repaired to Adelaide's

chamber ; but, far from finding the improvement she looked for, she perceived evident symptoms of serious indisposition, that threatened a continuance of more trouble than her Ladyship was disposed to encounter, and she forthwith set about revolving how to shift the inconvenience and responsibility from her own shoulders.

Having failed in stamping the conviction of Sir Arthur's passion upon the mind of his ward, she now determined to bring it to the proof by his personal appearance at the Lodge, which a slight exaggeration of what had occurred, worded with happy ambiguity, she felt sure would produce ; she accordingly despatched the following note :—

‘Lady Samford is under the painful necessity of informing Sir Arthur Delmaine of the very distressing state of Mlle. d’Hauteroche, who has been in fits ever since the receipt of a letter brought by

‘ her servant Pierre some hours ago. She  
‘ does not recover sufficient coherence in  
‘ the intervals to express her own wishes,  
‘ and Lady S. is fearful, in a case of deli-  
‘ cacy like the present, to do mischief, by  
‘ forcing medical attendance upon her ;  
‘ but the frequent repetition of the name of  
‘ Julia sufficiently evinces the comfort she  
‘ would derive from the presence of Miss  
‘ Delmaine, — if Sir Arthur could have  
‘ the goodness to bring her with him, as he  
‘ will, doubtless, be anxious to ascertain in  
‘ person what there may be to apprehend  
‘ from the actual situation of his severely-  
‘ suffering ward.’

Sir Arthur’s sensations on receiving this despatch need scarcely be described ; — thrown entirely from his self-possession, and incapacitated for every prudential consideration by the terror it excited, he instantly ordered his post-chaise, directed Julia to prepare to accompany him, and, without awaiting the return of Lady Del-

maine, who was gone to make a distant visit, he left only an incoherent line of communication, and in less than an hour after the arrival of the messenger, was on his way to Samford Lodge.

## CHAP. XVII.

THE agitation of the unhappy Adelaide had gradually subsided into low fever, for which she resolutely declined any interference of medical advice ; satisfied with its affording a reason for secluding herself in the solitude of her own apartment. And to this enjoyment her complying hostess readily consigned her, — having acquitted herself to her own conscience, by calling over the names to her guest of the several physicians within reach, and submitted without opposition to the objections renewed on the mention of each, in the full reliance that the true physician was on his road, and, perhaps, not altogether desirous that a too speedy amendment should betray the exaggeration of her statement.



Even more rapid than her calculations had been Sir Arthur's movements, and a momentary expression of embarrassment manifested itself in her countenance, when he was unexpectedly introduced into her bed-chamber. She had not yet risen; and her friend, the Baron, was amicably seated in the lounging-chair by the bedside, with a cup in one hand and a pamphlet in the other, from which he seemed to be reading to her, in the intervals of sipping his chocolate.

Lady Samford's establishment was a heterogeneous mass of foreigners, collected wherever she could meet with them, in preference to prying Englishmen, so addicted to misunderstand the most innocent actions; — a point in which foreign servants are of an eminently easy and liberal disposition — ‘good-humoured, unobservant creatures, ever ready to do any thing.’ So far she represented them justly enough — ‘ever ready to do any thing,’ certainly, and in any way, at

any time ; — the consequence of which was, that at one hour of the day they were running their heads against each other, by all setting about the same thing, whilst at another they were so separately employed that not one was at leisure to answer a bell, or considered it to be his particular duty so to do. — Still, thro' all this 'most admired disorder,' the family business was, *tant bien que mal*, accomplished : and had it not been that François, (the confidential French servant provided for her by her German friend,) who usually attended the breakfast when his lady took it in bed, chose on this morning to have his hair cut by the Baron's valet, and left the attendance to Ludovico, without instructions as to who was or was not to be admitted, Sir Arthur would not have been so awkwardly introduced to what she was conscious would be deemed an infringement of English decorum, however sanctioned by custom abroad.

Julia had been espied by Adélaïde's

maid as the carriage drove up to the door, and she had run eagerly to conduct her to her mistress. But Sir Arthur's patience was put to a pretty severe trial before the repeated knocking and ringing produced any effect ; — and it appeared to be owing to mere chance at last, that Ludovico, with coffee-pot in one hand, and muffin in the other, was tempted to put his head out of the window as he passed it, to see what all the bustle meant. Perceiving Sir Arthur, he quickly deposited his breakfast things upon the stairs, and hastened to the door with abundant apologies and assurances that he would conduct him straight to the *Padrona* ; — so, seizing again upon his cargo, he led the way. Sir Arthur was inclined to demur when he saw him opening the door of a ~~bed~~ room, and, doubtingly, asked, “whether he was to follow him?”

“ *Sicuro ! — lustrissimo ! — sicuro !* ” shouted Ludovico, “ *cosa teme ? — non c'è altro del Signor Barone !* ”

And with this encouragement Sir Arthur was ushered into the presence, as has been said, of her recumbent Ladyship, and her philosophical admirer. Seeking to cover her embarrassment with a laugh, she took notice, “that there could be no fear of Sir Arthur’s having so far lost sight of foreign manners as to be shocked” — at being admitted to a lady’s bed-side, she would have said : but Sir Arthur, too deeply absorbed in his distressing fears to attend to the scene before him, or the intended apology, abruptly broke into her speech with, — “Shocked, Lady Samford ! — good God, how could I avoid it ? — for the love of heaven, relieve my anxiety for my unhappy ward ! — What do the medical people say ? — Are any of them at hand for me to have recourse to ?” — The most impassioned solicitude spoke in his tone and look.

“ You, probably, are too well aware of the inflexibility of Mademoiselle d’Hau-

teroche, to hear with much surprise that all my rhetoric has proved ineffectual to obtain the admission of any medical man whatever ?”

“ Heavenly powers, Lady Samford ! Was *that* a point to be left to the decision of a person under the influence of feverish delirium, such as you have stated her to be ? — My God ! could I have anticipated this ?” — and he flew to the bell with a precipitate violence that startled the phlegmatic Baron, and rather discomposed the lady.

That bell was, however, more frequently rung than attended to ; and the present delay of any result from the operation, gave time for Lady Samford’s words to make some impression, as she strenuously exclaimed, “ Consider, Sir Arthur ! — in mercy to her, — do but for an instant consider the consequence of exposing her to the observation of strangers in her present state ! ’Tis not in physic to ‘ minister to a mind diseased :’ you have mis-

construed the sense of my note ; — it was but meant to bring the *true* physician to her.”

“ Heaven and earth ! I shall go distracted with contending feelings ! ” striking his forehead wildly, as he threw himself into a chair. — “ May I not be favoured with a private audience, Lady Samford ? ” glancing towards the Baron, who had continued carelessly perusing his pamphlet, and sipping his chocolate, while this conversation was going on.

“ Most assuredly,” she replied ; and turning to her friend, “ my dear Baron,” she said, “ we will, if you please, shew ourselves worthy pupils of our great instructor, Bacon, by submitting that new theory to the test of experiment this morning, if you will go and prepare matters for it in the laboratory.”

“ *Toujours à vos ordres,* ” was the gallant reply ; and, having finally concluded his repast, he, with a slight inclination of the head to Sir Arthur, withdrew.

Lady Samford, intent upon her own justification, was beginning a brilliant enumeration of her friend's scientific acquirements, when she was again abruptly interrupted by Sir Arthur : “ For pity's sake relieve me from torture ! — and explain what you could mean, by so terrific a representation of what you now seem to hold so light ? ”

“ I meant exactly what I have accomplished, to bring you to the preservation, not indeed of her life, but of her senses ; —

‘ Repair me with thy presence, *Silvio*,’

was the only cry with her, or at least would have been, were she as well read in Shakspeare as” —

“ O sport not ! ” he cried, in a tone of the deepest energy, — “ sport not, I conjure you, with feelings that have drawn me to the very verge of insanity ! — You know not, — you cannot know the struggles in this breast ; — the conflict to which I am a prey : — never was man so strangely circumstanced ! ” —

“ Never did man act so strangely under such circumstances, I will venture to say,” she retorted. “ Could it have entered into any head but an English one, that a refined Platonic affection, such as this poor girl, in the simplicity of her heart, nourishes for you, might not be answered by sentiments equally refined on your part, without the slightest infringement on those domestic ties which it is the peculiar affectation of this country to rate so high :—though, on my life, it is worthy of remark, that in this boasted moral land such slight reliance should be placed on the efficacy of moral principle, that nothing less than the desperate measures you are contriving to torture this unhappy child with, are to be held a sufficient protection against the *dangers* of a virtuous friendship between the sexes !”

This taunt vibrated on his already somewhat unsettled feelings. “ I could scarcely have looked for female reprobation.



tion of my perhaps too fastidious scruples," he replied, with warmth ; — " If, as I must presume, your Ladyship has seen the unfortunate letter that has occasioned this distress, I should have hoped some credit was, at least, due to so painful a sacrifice, voluntarily made in the cause of delicacy."

" Some credit due ! — Oh, I'll deem the effort sublime to please you, provided you admit of my recording it as a vote of censure upon the barbarism of our nation, for its utter inability to conceive those refined distinctions so well understood abroad. — Gods ! how astonished would my much-esteemed Baron be, should I see occasion to apprise him of the mortifying fact, that my reputation might in the slightest degree suffer from the honest, friendly zeal, for my improvement in botany and chemistry, which has brought him so speedily to resort to me on my return."

This observation was, like the other

justificatory attempts, completely thrown away : the Baron occupied no portion of Sir Arthur's thoughts. Finding she received no answer, she resumed : — “ I protest, an instance of such heroic self-denial as yours recalls the Scipios and Bayards of former times,” with a sarcastic laugh ; “ though the true hero, in my estimation, is he who vanquishes instead of pusillanimously flying from temptation. — And still less can I allow the *merit* of securing one's own peace at the expence of a beloved object.”

“ My own peace ! — Oh, how widely you misjudge me ! — I call Heaven to witness, 'tis for hers I am inflicting all this misery on her and on myself — ”

“ ‘ Cry you mercy, Sir Arthur ! — I was not aware Adelaide was so wholly dependent on your forbearance ; I believed her mind armed with some dignified powers of resistance. — Heroic indeed ! — Then, Scipio, hide thy diminished head ! ’ ”

“ If I have uttered a word that will

bear such an implication, I have foully aspersed the most spotless mind that ever informed a female breast. Dignity and elevation of soul she indeed possesses, in no common degree, with an unconsciousness of evil scarce credible, and but too certain of being misconstrued by the world, and exposing her to censures 'tis distraction even to think of. — You must have seen, Lady Samford — you could not but observe” — He hesitated.

“ Yes, yes ! — I saw and observed enough to do her business with the world, certainly. There she wants tutoring, I confess ; and I am ready to lend you all the assistance in my power ; — but not to take part in such violent measures as would drive her out of her senses, which, in good truth, I considered her as being when I wrote to you.”

Sir Arthur's honourable resolves had received a staggering blow from Lady Samford's letter ; and, wanting that all-enlightening guide and guard, which detects and

resists the bewildering sophistry of worldly argument and ungrounded ridicule, he shrunk from her sarcasms, and felt but too ready to lay to his heart the flattering unction, of gentler proceedings than those his integrity had originally prompted. He had, on leaving home, sought to strengthen himself in his plan of laudable forbearance, by determining merely to ascertain the real state of what had been so vaguely reported;—see the physicians;—assure himself how far they were to be relied on;—leave Julia to watch over her friend, — and return without venturing to behold the dangerous object of his solicitude, whose ultimate welfare seemed so imperiously to prescribe the sacrifice of every indulgence to himself:— in furtherance of which purpose he prudently instructed his daughter not to betray his having accompanied her. And what had been requisite to put this wisdom all to flight? — two or three trite commonplace witticisms, uttered in a most con-

*temptuous* tone of irony — “ Aye, there was the rub ! ” — by one of whom he was most justly beginning to form so slighting an opinion, that her approbation would have carried no manner of weight, had she perfectly coincided in his proper views.

Conscious of his own wavering, and half ashamed — not of *it*, as he well might have been, but — of sentiments which had provoked her ridicule, he hesitatingly said, “ Perhaps then you think — you think then, perhaps — that I had better see her before I go.”

“ See her ! — Lord ! to be sure ! — What, in the name of wonder, did you come for else ? — But unless I *chaperon* you, I suppose there would be no prevailing on her to admit you, — for with her naturalization she seems to have imbibed all the prudish nonsense of this country, — and she is assuredly not fit to leave her own room. So if you will find your way to the library whilst I get up — ”

“Would she not think Julia sufficient protection against any apparent impropriety, while she is so ill?”—he interrupted, very reluctant to be accompanied by his self-constituted confidante in this first interview.

“Julia!—Miss Delmaine!—Have you then brought her with you?”—cried the lady, highly gratified on various accounts with this intelligence. “That was indeed well judged.—But what have you done with her?”

“She is, I apprehend, with Adelaide, whose maid took possession of her ere ever she could alight from the carriage.”

“Then there can be no doubt:—Louison shall conduct you.”—And she once more applied to the hitherto unanswered bell. While Mademoiselle Louison is consulting her leisure to obey the summons, we may follow Julia into the sick room.

The sight of her acted like an electrical shock, in rousing Adelaide from the torpor, in which she had been sunk

ever since the subduing of the fits. Throwing herself on the bosom of her friend, she dissolved in such passionate floods of tears, as left her no power of distinct articulation. All that Julia could understand, was the frequently reiterated exclamation of — “ I have not then wholly forfeited his esteem, since he has sent you ! ”

The endeavour to soothe and re-assure her had as yet made but little progress in restoring composure, when Louison’s knock at the door, and the introduction of Sir Arthur, produced a revulsion so powerful, that starting forward from the couch on which she was lying, and uttering, with a wild scream, “ Oh, my blessed, blessed — ” ere she could add the word “ guardian,” her over excited senses forsook her, and she would have dropped lifeless on the floor, had he not caught her in his arms.

“ Merciful Heaven ! what is all this, Julia ? ” he frantically cried, as he depo-

sited his insensible burthen again upon her couch. "What have I done?"

"The surprise was too much—you had forbidden my imparting you were come, you know, and she is so reduced:—Oh my poor dear Adelaide!"—In saying this she had made strenuous application to the bell, which soon brought her affectionate attendants, Pierre and Madeleine, to her assistance. "I believe, papa, you had better leave her to us till she is a little recovered:—Such repeated shocks will destroy her."

His extreme agitation had driven the circumstance of his own prohibition from his memory: he could make no answer, but striking his forehead with violence, he rushed out of the room:—no farther, however, than to pace backward and forward in the lobby with hurried step, listening, at every turn, at the door for the sound of her voice; but a considerable length of time elapsed, and yet it was not heard.



In this disordered state he was joined by Lady Samford, who, as she approached, gaily cried, “ Lord help us ! have you made no farther progress yet ? ”

“ Progress ! ” in a tone of deep despondency, “ I have all but destroyed her ! ”

“ By merely sending in your name ? — Pathetic indeed ! — I see I must take her into training. — Come, I’ll introduce you ! ” — seizing his arm to drag him into the chamber, perfectly unheeding his attempts to break into her mis-timed levity, by repeating what had occurred ; till forcibly at last disengaging himself from her hold, he cried, “ For the love of mercy, do not compel me to aggravate the mischief by a repetition of my imprudence ! ”

By this time, Pierre, who had been the terrified spectator of Julia’s and Madeleine’s unavailing efforts to restore consciousness, hearing voices, and thinking an increase of numbers would in-

crease the chances of success, threw open the door, and with piteous wringing of hands, and tears streaming down his old cheeks, exhorted them to come in and lend their assistance.

Lady Samford, catching a view of the death-like form stretched upon the couch, saw the matter was more serious than she had supposed, and immediately directed Pierre to despatch the groom to the next town for medical advice. Having then patiently listened to Julia's account of what had actually happened, she could not "chuse but wonder," at such mighty results from causes so trivial, as they seemed in her estimation to be; for if (as an eminent moralist \* has clearly explained) we can only sympathize with others as far as we find in ourselves corresponding sentiments, it was quite out of the question for Lady Samford's skin-deep impressions to help her to understand the intense sensibilities

\* Adam Smith.

of the enthusiastic Adelaide. In default of sympathy, she however had elocution at command ; and as it was her object to propitiate Julia, in order to secure her continuance at the Lodge, she expressed all that another might have felt, in such appropriate language, that the simple girl entertained no doubt of her feelings being every thing that could be wished for her friend, and was attracted to her in proportion.

A long and deep-drawn sigh at length gave token of returning animation, and drove Sir Arthur from the melancholy and fascinating contemplation of her lovely countenance, in which he had been allowed to indulge by means of the half-open door, purposely so left by Lady Samford. And transcendently lovely, even in its lifeless state, was the impression it retained of the ecstatic rapture that had so entirely overpowered her !—An expression of anxious disappointment took its place,—as her gradual

recovery enabled her to glance from one to another of those surrounding her, — which Julia instantly understood. Approaching her ear, she gently whispered, “ Papa does but wait your perfect restoration from this fainting fit to come back.”

“ Oh I will soon be well then ! — bless you, Julia ! ” — kissing the hand which she held, her speaking features denoting the satisfaction conveyed by this intelligence. She continued quiet for some time. Lady Samford took the opportunity of slipping away to relieve Sir Arthur’s fears ; and having done so, exempted herself from farther attendance upon the invalid for the present.

As Adelaide came more to herself, the tumultuous sensation of joy mastered every other feeling, and totally obliterated the sense of remaining indisposition. She insisted on being dressed, — on going into the drawing-room, — on dining at table ; — she was perfectly well, and would listen to no objection.

Relying on the arrival of the physician in time to interpose his authority, before these exertions should have gone the length of proving injurious, Julia gave her reluctant assent to what she had not power to avert.

A rare occurrence, indeed, it would have been in the annals of Samford Lodge, had any servant been found at his post in the hour of emergency. When Pierre went to the stables in quest of the groom, affairs in that part of the establishment stood thus :—the coachman, desirous of a holiday, that he might attend a boxing-match a few miles off, had secured it by physicking the coach-horses, leaving the subsequent care of them in charge with the groom ;—the groom having a hankering after a horse-fair in another direction, was unwilling to omit the airing of my lady's saddle horse, and made over the charge to the stable-boy, with an injunction not to betray him to the coachman, and the promise of being back

in an hour. But who can answer for resisting the various temptations a fair may hold out?—Not Joe, for one :—hour after hour had gone by without bringing him back ;—and rumours of a bull-baiting having meanwhile reached the ears of the boy, he saw no great harm in just locking the stable-door, putting the key where he knew Joe would look for it, if he chanced to get home first, and taking Sir Arthur's post-boy to see the sport. At this unlucky moment of general desertion, Pierre came with the order for fetching the doctor.—What was to be done?—A council was called of François, Ludovico, and Fritz, but to little effect ;—none of them had any resource to offer ;—they neither knew the road, the doctor, nor the language.—Neither did Pierre ; but he had zeal, was alarmed for his mistress, and determined to do something, though he knew not what ;—when the donkey, which was kept for the purpose of fetching the flour from

the mill, happening just then to send forth its melodious voice, suggested the bright thought to Pierre, that he might mount him and go for the doctor himself. And he was encouraged in the undertaking by Adelaide's maid, who had come down for something wanted for her lady, and who, from what she had heard Lady Samford say, could both inform him of the name and place of abode ; — whence it also appeared that the first few miles were on the way to the mill, which donkey well knew. Just before coming to the division of the road there was a public-house, where further directions might be had.

All this intelligence made the matter so plain, that Pierre, laying his leg across Neddy's back with great alacrity, set forth, nothing doubting, and as far as the road to the mill went, no proceeding could be more prosperous ; — but at the turning off which had been pointed out, a conflict arose, for which those

who are conversant in donkeys may be better prepared than poor Pierre was. The beast made a dead stand, and no power of blows, kicks, or execrations, produced the slightest tendency to onward motion : — Donkey reared, kicked, in return, — and remained immoveable ; till at length, choosing to bear such treatment no longer, and an inviting pool of water offering itself near the separation of the roads, the animal all at once dashed into it, and by a sudden roll tumbled Pierre off his back, whose head striking against a low post by the side of the pool, he lay stunned for a few moments ; while Neddy availed himself of his recovered liberty, by retracing his steps merrily homewards, leaving his unlucky rider sprawling half in and half out of the water. The poor fellow, on gaining his senses, finding himself completely drenched, took the only course that remained for him : he returned to the public-house to get himself dried, and



endeavour to make it understood that the doctor was wanted at Samford Lodge. The name and abode Madeleine had put down for him in writing ; so that with the assistance of signs and tokens, among which the producing money for the payment of a messenger spoke the most intelligible language, he finally got them to comprehend his object, and obtained the promise of their expediting it, whenever their horse, which was out, should come in. Satisfied he had done all he could, and having got himself tolerably dry, he set forth to measure back his weary way with all the expedition he was able, but did not reach home till the day was far spent, and then he had the vexation of not finding the doctor come, notwithstanding all the promises of expedition given him.

Julia was perfectly sensible of Adelaide's unfitness to leave her room ; but the physician not having arrived to her support, she had only affectionate persua-

sions to oppose to a determination, not easily shaken at any time, and now strengthened by the energy of fast increasing fever. Wholly deaf to all remonstrance, she was no sooner dressed, than forcibly laying hold of her friend's arm, she insisted upon going down into the drawing-room. Here they found Sir Arthur alone, pacing the apartment in all the agitation of his disturbed mind.

Before either he or Julia could anticipate her purpose, Adelaide, advancing rapidly towards him, flung herself upon her knees, and cried, "O forgive!—forgive!—my most beloved and venerated guardian!—if I have, by word or action, lowered myself in your esteem!—but in pity do not banish me!—Suffer me only to exist in your presence, and my very thoughts shall be under your control;—but if you persist in sending me from you, I cannot, will not live!"

Confounded and embarrassed beyond measure, "Forgive you!" he reiterated.

“ Good God ! — dearest girl ! — what have I to forgive ? ” — attempting to raise her as he spoke. “ For Heaven’s sake ! Adelaide ! rise ! — you will drive me distracted. ’Tis I that — ” His eye fell upon Julia, and he suddenly checked himself.

Disengaging herself from his efforts to raise her, “ I will not leave this posture,” she said, “ till I obtain your reversing the sentence of banishment in that cruel letter, by a promise that I shall not be separated from you.”

“ I will promise any thing and every thing,” (scarce knowing what he said,) “ so you will but rise from that degrading posture, and submit to take care of yourself ; — for, indeed, Adelaide, you are ill.” — Her wild look and flushed cheek evidently showed her to be so.

“ And do you not think so badly of me as that terrible letter implied ? ” — allowing herself now to be raised and seated on the sofa.

“ Powers of mercy ! under what inconceivable misconstruction do you labour ? — *I think ill of you !* — I take Heaven to witness, the purity of angels cannot exceed my opinion of yours ! ”

“ Oh ! now indeed you give me great relief ; ” and a plentiful gush of tears followed these words. “ But why, then, would you banish me your presence ? ” she presently added.

“ My dearest ward ! you are not well enough for any agitating topics now ; you must be kept quiet. When you are quite recovered, we will discuss this matter, and your own unbiassed judgment shall then guide us in the proper course to be pursued. ”

Adelaide thought herself clear in what her judgment would point out that course should be, and felt satisfied. Whilst Sir Arthur was on his part fast receding, in spite of his better reason, from the integrity of his original resolves, and giving way to the delusive idea that some less

painful security might be found for his adherence to the dictates of virtue. — But virtue's is not a cause to be served by temporizing expedients. It was already no slight aberration from right moral feeling, to lose sight, as he was doing, of the importance of guarding against the very appearance of wrong. On this Adelaide had never bestowed a thought, and Sir Arthur was beginning to debate in his own mind whether he might not have bestowed too many.

Here a considerable pause ensued.

This is at length broken by the entrance of Mary Samford,—when Julia entreated both her and Sir Arthur to join with her in persuading Adelaide to return to her chamber, instead of dining at table. The fluctuations of colour in her countenance plainly showing her to be growing rapidly worse, they readily concurred with the request ; but their efforts were vain ; nor was it till the smell of the victuals, as she entered the parlour, finally

satisfied her of her incapacity to sit at table, that she suffered herself to be led to her own room, where a succession of fainting fits evinced the mischief done by the over-exertions she had made.

This account, brought down by Madeleine to the dinner party, instantly drew Julia from it, and produced an enquiry into the result of the groom's embassy, who was by this time returned from the fair, and had never heard any thing of the orders. Sir Arthur, having been eagerly and momentarily looking <sup>ings</sup> for the physician, was almost beside him<sup>self</sup> not at this report, and with an oath, such as he was not apt to be betrayed into uttering, jumped up, declaring he would trust no other than his own servant for fetching him, who he knew would hunt him out wherever, he might be to be found; and, accordingly, Matthew was instantly despatched, with injunctions he was pretty secure would produce a speedy effect. Pierre had not at this time re-appeared;

and the unwillingness servants usually have to betray each other's proceedings, left an air of such unpardonable neglect upon the face of the thing as abundantly irritated Sir Arthur, and determined him, instead of setting out on his return home in the evening, as he had fully intended, to remain where he was till he could obtain a certainty of all danger being past, supposing there should actually be any, as he saw but too much cause to apprehend.

Here<sup>''</sup> then we must for the present leave<sup>''</sup> him in no very enviable situation, whilst we recur to the effects of his absence at Hawkwood Manor.

## CHAP. XVIII.

ON Lady Delmaine's return from her morning visit she received the unwelcome information of Sir Arthur's abrupt departure with Julia; and it was brought distressingly home to her feelings by the evident disorder of the hurried note he had left to account for it. She had not been able wholly to deceive herself, however much she sought to do so, as to the cause of the change that had of late taken place in his habits and manners; and she was kept in that miserably vacillating state, between long-cherished confidence and newly-awakened doubt, so dreadfully harassing to weak spirits and a mind somewhat deficient in energy. Firm,



however, in reliance on her husband's integrity, she acquitted him of voluntary error, but she felt that his affections were estranged ; and, mild and gentle by nature, found no resource in herself to save her from sinking under the sad consciousness of irremediable evil.

In strong contrast were the ebullitions of Charlotte's displeasure, which only waited her mother's return to break forth.

“Dearest, dearest mamma !” she began, tears of anger streaming down her cheek, as she gave utterance to her feelings ; “how dreadfully prophetic have aunt Barbara's words proved ! — O that you had but sent this wicked, cruel girl away before she had acquired such influence over my fa —”

“Hush, Charlotte ! I command you !” interrupted Lady Delmaine, roused to unwonted exertion by this intemperate speech ; — “For your life, never let such another word escape your lips, either in

my presence or out of it, on pain of my most serious displeasure! — Your aunt's indulgence of you has turned your head."

Little accustomed to so severe a rebuke, and stung with her own supposed wrongs in the alienation of her sister, she was beginning to answer her mother in a tone she had never before given way to, when Lady Delmaine again stopt her: — "Go to your own room and recover yourself, Charlotte! — And impress this upon your mind, that I believe Adelaide as innocent of intention as yourself, and that you cannot offend me more than by reflecting on your father."

Charlotte obeyed, with a swelling heart and an increased malevolence to Adelaide, who was the means of accumulating such ills upon her; for never till now had her mother expressed herself with a harshness which seemed all the greater for Charlotte's conviction that it originated in partiality for Adelaide.

Sir Arthur had stated in his note, that his object was only to convey Julia and return immediately. The time at which he might have been expected, however, passed by, without producing him, or any account of the cause of his delay. This was new to Lady Delmaine. Never before had he so disappointed her without carefully obviating either by letter or messenger any anxiety that might have arisen from it ;—nor in fact had he been neglectful of such attention now. He had duly written to explain his being detained until his friend Dr. Cosby could arrive, to whom he said he had sent a summons, having been equally alarmed and disgusted by the ignorance and self-conceit of the physician Lady Samford had called in, when he finally made his appearance. So far all was right :—but, in the extreme discomposure of his mind, he had folded the letter to Lady Delmaine in <sup>the</sup> same cover with that to the doctor, with which Matthew was sent off

express, and the mistake remained undetected till after it had given increased power to mischief, which had lain dormant for a period, only to break forth with deeper effect.

Had the demon of discord sought for a firebrand to set the world in a flame, he could not have selected one fitter for the purpose, than such an outrageous votary in the cause of morality, as Lady Barbara Strickland. The same headlong zeal that prompts religious conversion by sword and faggot, animated the efforts of this judicious lady to restore harmony and tranquillity at Hawkwood Manor. Her quarrel with Lady Delmaine had by no means destroyed her solicitude for her welfare. Professing herself to be of a "placable and forgiving spirit," though acknowledging that "a somewhat hasty temper occasionally obscured its lustre," she only waited the proper opportunity of displaying this amiable quality in its fullest light; for

which purpose she had been diligent during her secession from the Delmaine family, in completing the body of evidence, we have before described her means of collecting : a mass of proofs, or of materials out of which proof might be construed, such as, thanks to the ingenuity and veracity employed in preparing them, might have made no inconsiderable figure in Doctors' Commons.

Having crowned the whole with the intelligence just obtained, of Sir Arthur's disappearance from home, she forthwith despatched the following letter to Lady Delmaine : —

‘ Poor passive dupe !

‘ I scarce know whether most to com-  
‘ miserate or condemn such unjustifiable  
‘ acquiescence in unblushing profligacy !—  
‘ for that you can be blind to the barefaced  
‘ proceedings at Samford Lodge, is not to  
‘ be credited :—Though, in the true spirit  
‘ of impartiality, I am ready to profess

‘ my admiration of the amiable ingenuous-  
‘ ness with which the peerless Adelaide  
‘ crowns her other perfections, evincing  
‘ her just appreciation of her own re-  
‘ spectability, by consorting with a woman  
‘ of notoriously lost character!—this unas-  
‘ suming modesty has not but completed  
‘ the subjugation of her guardian. But I  
‘ must tell you, Lady Delmaine, that by  
‘ whatever absurd principle of conjugal  
‘ submission you may gloss over to yourself  
‘ your inconceivable apathy, you are in  
‘ fact, countenancing the immorality of  
‘ your husband; while, as a parent, you  
‘ have still more to answer for, in tamely al-  
‘ lowing Julia to be made the tool and the  
‘ victim to foreign art, and a witness to  
‘ such glaring improprieties. Arouse then!  
‘ and stand forward as you are bound to do!  
‘ —and save your child from the conta-  
‘ mination of pernicious example! — Do  
‘ you lack proof of Sir Arthur’s infidelity?  
‘ — Such damning proof I here enclose, as

‘ no one in their senses can resist. Read,  
‘ and be convinced !

‘ When I last parted from you, it was  
‘ with a determination to wash my hands  
‘ of this nefarious business altogether. But  
‘ a sense of what is due to the hitherto un-  
‘ sullied honour of our house moves me  
‘ once more to call you, in the name of  
‘ virtue and good morals, to exertion. If  
‘ you continue to slight my warning voice,  
‘ you must abide the consequences ; but,  
‘ trust me, you will live to rue the day. —  
‘ B. S.’

Together with this precious composition came all the documents so carefully compiled.

Severe as cruel was the wound inflicted by the first perusal of so bitter a philippic. It arrived on the second day of Sir Arthur’s protracted and still unaccounted-for absence. Lady Delmaine’s spirits were miserably depressed before she received it. Not the slightest idea of cri-

minality, however, had presented itself to her thoughts; but it evidently appeared his affections were alienated, and she was undone.

Whilst dissolved in tears over this sad conviction, an unusual stir in the house caught her ear, and seemed to indicate an arrival. No other object presented itself to her imagination than him on whom she was painfully meditating; and hastily drying her eyes, and reproaching herself for having given way to unjust doubts of one who was come himself to explain all, she eagerly turned her steps to the scene of action, where she was affectionately greeted,—not by Sir Arthur, but Augustus Stanmore.

A momentary start of disappointment, before saluting him with a maternal embrace, showed him he was not the person she expected.

“I am not the welcome guest you looked for,” he observed; “Sir Arthur



has, I find, been expected these two days."

Waiving this allusion to her husband, which she feared to touch upon, "You are ever welcome here, Augustus!" she said; "but the sight of you certainly surprised me, having believed you on your way to Italy."

"You have not been well, Lady Delmaine?" declining that subject in *his* turn, and surveying her with an eye of anxious scrutiny, being much struck with her haggard looks.

"Not' particularly ill," she replied; "but come into the drawing-room," she continued, unwilling he should pursue his enquiries in presence of the servants, who were busied with his luggage. "I will send for Charlotte; she will be rejoiced at the sight of you."

"And Julia, I hope, and Mademoiselle d'Hauteroche — may I not see them?"

"They are just now absent on a visit: — Adelaide is not well."

“ Not well! — She has had a dreadful accident, I understand — O tell me the particulars !” in a voice of great alarm.

“ A very serious one indeed, and has left serious consequences ; — though, to look at her, you can scarcely suspect the injury received : — she has lost the sight of the eye.”

“ Gracious Heaven ! — What do I hear ! — I could not credit it !” — and he remained as stupified. After a pause — “ But you said, — absent on a visit ; — Where ?”

“ Lady Samford prevailed on Adelaide to accompany her home.”

“ Good God ! — Adelaide in the house of that worthless woman ! — O Lady Delmaine ! — how could Sir Arthur suffer it ?”

“ *That worthless woman !*” These words vibrated heavily on Lady Delmaine’s heart : their concurrence with Lady Barbara’s assertion struck her forcibly. — “ *Worthless woman !*” she reiterated.

“ I speak so strongly from having accidentally at Paris met with the deserted

wife of the man her arts have inveigled into joining her here. The poor woman is passionately fond of her husband, and weakly clamorous in her complaints to whoever will listen to them."

"Sir Arthur could not know this, Augustus!—and *I* could not suspect it from the high character given her by our old friend the General, whose niece, you know, she is."

"She is indeed sufficiently deep to *depayser* a dozen of such credulous uncles.—But oh, Lady Delmaine! I am wretched beyond expression at what you tell me!"

"You have not then heard any thing to lessen your admiration of Adelaide?" Lady Delmaine asked in a tone tremulous from an undefined apprehension of some farther coincidence with the cruel letter.

"There can be but one opinion of *Mademoiselle d'Hauteroche*," he emphatically exclaimed: "she has been from infancy idolized by all that know her."

Lady Delmaine breathed more freely ; for, strange to say, though not less true, this generous woman could as ill have borne a degradation of character in this her rival, as in one of her own daughters. Possibly those who are inclined to dispute the assertion on the score of generosity, may solve it to themselves in another light, by the supposition that on the innocence of heart of the ward she unconsciously relied, for the guardian's recovery to the right path. If this be the explanation, she was certainly self-deceived; for she thought herself firm in the persuasion that her husband's integrity could never be so far led astray, as to suffer him actually to commit a wrong action.

Augustus was now again urgent for a detail of the accident, which was given him, — designedly suppressing any particular specification of its having been voluntarily incurred, but with a strong eulogium on the fortitude with which its

consequences had been endured, as well as on the indifference expressed for the probable loss of beauty — a sentiment so extraordinary in a lovely girl of her age !

“ She may be disfigured,” cried Augustus fervently, “ but no blemish will ever reach her heavenly mind !”

Charlotte broke into any farther explanation, by bounding into the room, in the fulness of delight at the news of his arrival, and greeting him with true sisterly affection. Lady Delmaine, desirous of some repose for her perturbed spirits, left them together and retired to her own apartment, with the judicious determination of not again casting her eyes over Lady Barbara’s letter, and the magnanimous resolve of forbearing the perusal of the criminating documents altogether. — She placed them for the present under lock and key, till she should settle more deliberately whether to return or destroy them.

The first effusions of Charlotte’s joy

being past, her thoughts naturally reverted to the subject that had before engrossed them, and quickly satisfying herself that Augustus was the person of all others who ought to be made acquainted with what had been passing, she began opening her budget of grievances without farther consideration. As her view of the matter, however, fell infinitely short of the depth of wickedness assumed in Lady Barbara's statements, her accusations chiefly turned on the unpardonable selfishness of Adelaide, in seeking to draw away all confidence and affection from their natural course, and centering them in herself; — this she dwelt on with much reprobation : — but her representations, although differing in some degree from those of her mother, did not involve any blame to be attached to her father.

Willing to be as impartial as she could, she continued, “ I must, however, acknowledge, that upon one occasion, Adelaide performed so generous an action, as

almost made me forgive her every thing, for it was to save the blow that threatened papa's life, she risked her own by putting forward her head to intercept it. — I did love her for that ! — don't you ?”

This little trait did not exactly produce the effect upon the hearer it had done in the narrator. — Such an instance of self-devotion in favour of Lady Delmaine or Julia would have obtained his most rapturous applause ; but the quick instinctive perception of true love instantly turned to a variety of small concurring circumstances, “ trifles light as air,” and he was stunned with the conviction that all at once flashed upon him.

From Charlotte's various heads of accusation he had found no difficulty to exculpate Adelaide, either by playful irony or serious reprobation of her injustice ; — for, in fact, they were chiefly the coinage of her own brain ; fostered by jealousy respecting Julia, as well as by her aunt's bitter sarcasms and innuendos,

the real drift of which she was not competent to understand. But her last appeal utterly confounded him; and, finding himself unable to bear up under the feelings that oppressed him, he abruptly left the room, and retired to his own, to give a loose to the disquietude that had taken possession of him.

Here his cogitations were by no means tranquillising. He seemed to himself to have experienced a second refusal in this new view of the state of Adelaide's affection, although, assuredly, it might have puzzled any rational being to discover, whence the gleam of hope that had lately irradiated his bosom should have sprung. — But when were the hopes of lovers intelligible to reason? — His had not emanated from Adelaide certainly. There had been no shadow of change in *her* mind or language, since her peremptory rejection of his suit. — Could he have been talked into self-delusion by the confidence with which Mde. de Montménil had all along



seemed to consider her as destined to him?—To some lover, ardent as himself, must the solution be referred, since it is asserted that —

“ Love will hope where reason would despair.”

Our business is with facts — And the fact is, that he was again as completely overset as in the first instance, and in one respect more so ; for a feeling of bitter indignation against his guardian combined itself with the depressing sense of his own hopeless passion, to distract him. — He wished to throw off from his mind the impression which the lynx-eye of jealousy had, with its quick and unhappy perspicacity, caught at a glance, and set himself to a more deliberate, it could not be called calm, investigation of the suspicious circumstances he had been so forcibly struck with. The very extraordinary silence of Sir Arthur upon the accident came first in review, on which, in his present state of mind, he

could put no other construction than that of a designed concealment of what would not bear the light — some secret understanding, he suspected, with Adelaide! — Not that he could for a moment include her in his present injurious doubts, but she might be the dupe of her own visionary and romantic enthusiasm, and finally become a victim! — Good God! what a maddening thought! — Here was plain evidence of some deeply-calculated purpose! — Had she thus courted danger to save any other of the family, would it not have been made the theme of unbounded panegyric? — But too well did Sir Arthur know the only interpretation it here would bear; and thus by his guilty caution he betrayed the art with which he had inveigled her affections. — Nay, indeed! it might hence be fairly surmised, that such had been his course from the beginning; — and that whilst pretending to favour *his* suit, he had been

insidiously busy in winning Adelaide's yet unengaged heart to himself. Lady Delmaine's suppression of the circumstance came next under consideration, affording "confirmation strong." She was clearly unhappy—her looks bespoke it—and generously unwilling to betray the cause. — Besides, what could be more striking than *her* not going instead of *him*, upon a call of indisposition? — or, at the least, accompanying him? — And was it credible, however ignorant Lady Delmaine (who never encouraged gossiping scandal,) might be of Lady Sanford's lost character, that Sir Arthur should not have known to what hands he was consigning his ward? — Might there not even be a reason in the selection? —

He was now actually working himself up to a state of phrenzy, and dared not define, even in his own thoughts, what his apprehensions were becoming. He repeatedly dashed his head against the wall,

as if to stun the sense of the horrors that were pervading his imagination, and remained for a length of time incapable of farther thought.

In this condition we must leave him, till we have reverted to the no less distressing, though far calmer meditations of Lady Delmaine. A great increase of disquietude had naturally followed upon the corroboration of Lady Barbara's report of Lady Samford's misconduct, together with the failure of any explanation of Sir Arthur's prolonged absence. This was the first instance in their so long happy union, in which he had shown a neglect of relieving her anxiety, and it was deeply felt. Still she shrunk but with the greater dread from her aunt's interference. Were she to give way to the overture towards reconciliation which this letter seemed to offer, she was well aware that, however she might ward off the subject from herself, it would be pro-

secuted with most mischievous effect to others — to Charlotte in particular. Of the impending evils, it seemed to be incurring the least, to lay herself open to a charge of ingratitude by giving so cool a reply to Lady Barbara's communication, as she hoped might both silence and induce her to persist in keeping at a distance. It was long ere her tears and her agitation admitted of her taking up the pen ; but she at length wrote as follows : —

‘ P’orgive me, dear aunt, if I deviate  
‘ from the line of conduct your earnest so-  
‘ licitude recommends. It *may* be but too  
‘ fatally true that I have lost my husband’s  
‘ affections ; but it is *very certainly* true  
‘ that violence and reproaches never yet  
‘ recovered the heart that tenderness  
‘ could not retain. I will give Sir Arthur  
‘ no cause to cease to esteem me ; and on  
‘ that ground I rest my future hope.

‘ Seeking to conform myself in silent  
 ‘ submission to an irremediable evil, I  
 ‘ shall studiously avoid whatever can ag-  
 ‘ gravate my feelings ; and therefore have  
 ‘ abstained from casting my eyes over the  
 ‘ papers that accompanied your letter,  
 ‘ and earnestly entreat to be spared any  
 ‘ farther communications on the painful  
 ‘ subject.

‘ In regard to Julia, I should be truly  
 ‘ distressed to be found deficient in ma-  
 ‘ ternal vigilance ; but so intimately am I  
 ‘ convinced that Sir Arthur’s scrupulous  
 ‘ delicacy respecting his daughters could  
 ‘ not be exceeded by the most fastidious  
 ‘ mother, that I take it for granted, should  
 ‘ he perceive the slightest foundation for  
 ‘ censuring Lady Samford’s conduct, he  
 ‘ will, without my interference, bring  
 ‘ away both his daughter and his ward.

‘ With a grateful sense of your well-  
 ‘ meant, but mistaken zeal, I remain, &c.

‘ M. DELMAINE.’

It is only to be imputed to the ruffled state of Lady Delmaine's feelings, that this last unguarded sentence had escaped her ; for, although it was her intention to avoid reconciliation for the present by coolness, never had her mild and gentle spirit willingly offended ; and it was not in mortal pen to trace words of more deadly exasperation. — “ Well-meant, but mistaken zeal ! ” implying a weak inferiority of judgment in one who, to the best of her recollection, had never been mistaken in the course of her life. It was not to be borne, and never to be forgiven. [The irritating purport of the whole letter was so completely wound up to its climax by this concluding paragraph, as to have made it worth while to anticipate its effects, and so have done at once with her bitter Ladyship. And if the reader has taken half as great a dislike to her as her present biographer has done, it will be some relief to foresee that she will not speedily make her re-appearance.]

On assembling at the dinner-table, Charlotte immediately exclaimed, "Dear me, Augustus!—what have you been doing?—How odd you look!—So pale, and so wild!"

"Fatigued with his journey of course," said Lady Delmaine without looking up, more solicitous to save her own red and swollen eyes from notice, than to observe those of others.

Augustus did not reply, and no more was said: so gloomy a meal he had scarce ever known there before. More and more struck with Lady Delmaine's appearance, he only waited the absence of the domestics to say, "Your ladyship alluded to the indisposition of *Mademoiselle d'Hauteroche*, which had called Julia so suddenly away to attend her—I trust it could not be an alarming one, or *you* would probably have accompanied Julia yourself, instead of Sir Arthur."

"I did not see Lady Samford's letter,



being absent when it arrived," she replied with an effort at self-command ; " but I take it for granted it is not a very serious illness, as Sir Arthur only intended to convey Julia safely thither, and return without delay."

" And has neither come back nor written," he said, with evident discomposure. " Strange, assuredly !"

This jarred upon too susceptible a chord, and tears forced their way in spite of her : they acted upon the turmoil of Augustus's sensations like drops of oil upon fire. The flame must have burst forth, but, for a moment controlling himself, with a confused plea of — indisposition, — fatigue, &c., — he rose and left the room.

He had just prudence enough remaining to feel the importance of withholding his suspicions and his mad purpose from Lady Delmaine. But being now fully satisfied she was an injured wife, he, with

his characteristic impetuosity, resolved upon calling Sir Arthur to account : and without one moment's farther deliberation, set out accordingly, only leaving word that he had found it necessary to proceed a few miles without loss of time on urgent business, and did not exactly know when he might return.

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